The UNESCO COURIER

JUNE 1992

INTERVIEW WITH OSCAR NIEMEYER

In praise of TOLERANCE

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ENCOUNTERS

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

Tricontinentale
1991, Montage by Monique Constant-Desportes

Elements from three parts of the world combine in this composite work created by a woman doctor and artist of Martinique. Her montage consists of an African mask which she brought back from a visit to Cameroon, and a piece of basketwork, a typical art form of the Carib Indians, the first inhabitants of the Caribbean. The mask is inlaid with European coins, symbolizing the Westernization of black peoples. The artist, who describes herself as an Afro-European living in the Americas, regards the work as "representing the variegated reality of the Caribbean, a somewhat incongruous yet at times successful mixture".

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Aspiration for Peace, collage by the Indian artist V. Balu.
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Rencontres (1991) emery cloth mounted on wood, by Martine Viala (France).

The UNESCO COURIER

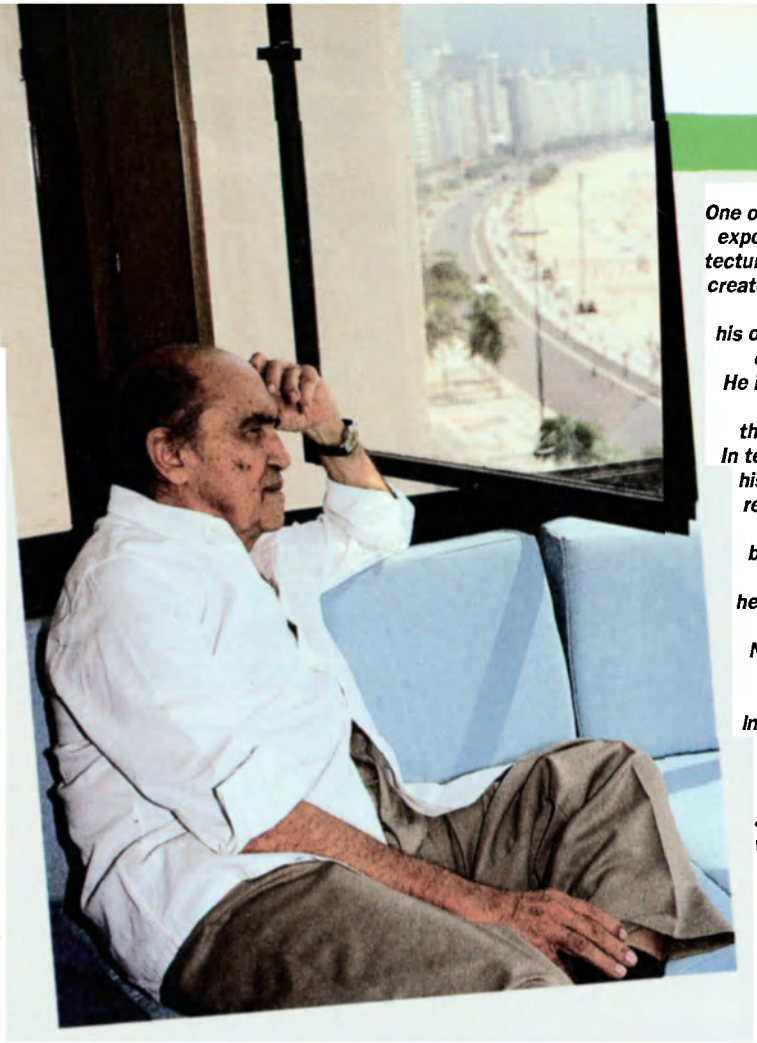
45th year — Published monthly in 36 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

OSCAR NIEMEYER

talks to Édouard Bailby



One of the most outstanding exponents of modern architecture, Oscar Niemeyer has created buildings of dazzling formal inventiveness in his own country, Brazil, and elsewhere in the world. He is particularly noted for his work on Brasília, the new capital of Brazil. In telling the Courier *about his remarkable career he recalls that architecture is not only utilitarian, but an art form of major significance, in which he gives pride of place to the imagination. Oscar Niemeyer has published many articles and a number of books including* Oscar Niemeyer *(Milan, 1977). French journalist Édouard Bailby is the author of a book about Niemeyer which will be published later this year by Balland, Paris.*

■ *At eighty-four years of age, with more than three hundred projects already built or at the planning stage and with Brasília as the pinnacle of your achievement, you can justifiably claim to be the most prolific architect of the century. Do you still feel the urge to carry on with your creative work?*

— I have little time left. I no longer travel, so as to be free to devote myself to my family and friends. However, I still go to my office in Copacabana every day from nine in the morning to seven in the evening, Saturdays included. I am incapable of sitting in an armchair doing nothing or simply brooding over the miseries of existence.

For me, architecture has always been a hobby as well as a profession; it attracts and absorbs me, but I don't attach overmuch importance to it. The main thing for me is to feel at ease with myself, to remain on the side of the needy and to denounce social injustices. That said, I have acquired a certain renown and the commissions still flow in. I have, however, reduced my team to four people so as to have a quieter life. It is important to remain active right up to the end. You only live once.

■ *So you are still working as an architect. What projects are you currently working on?*

— I am going to complete the Monumental Axis of Brasília by constructing three buildings which will possibly be the finest in the capital—the Museum, the National Library and the Historical Archives. They will put the final touch to my work as architect within the framework of the master plan elaborated by Lúcio Costa, the great Brazilian town-planner to whom I owe so much.

I have a number of other projects in hand that have already been approved, including the Museum of Niterói—a city of 500,000 inhabitants near Rio de Janeiro—and the Brazil-Portugal Centre in the heart of Lisbon. I have received orders for others, notably in São Paulo. The site of my most recent commission is the Island of Gorée, offshore from Dakar. I am particularly committed to this one because it will enable me to denounce the massive transportation of African slaves to our continent in the days of the slave trade. In Brazil, we received over four million of these slaves. Much as they were humiliated and exploited, they nevertheless took part in the struggles for independence and made a decisive contribution to our culture. At a time when we are celebrating the five hundredth anniversary of the discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus, it is essential to recall their sacrifice.

■ *You have always been alive to the problem of human suffering to which you have given expression in several monumental sculptures. The most famous of these is the bloody hand of the Latin American Memorial in São Paulo, which symbolizes the struggle of peoples against oppression. What are you planning for Gorée?*

— Through the good offices of an eminent personality for whom I have the greatest esteem, the Government of Senegal invited me to take part in an international competition. As usual, I declined the invitation, but offered instead to undertake the project without charging a fee. My project was approved at the beginning of this year and two missions came to Rio de Janeiro to see me and settle the details. Work should begin shortly.

The monument itself consists of an eighty-metre-high panel in which I have cut out the outline of a human figure. Rising above the sea, it symbolizes the uprooted African slave, vanished into space. The monument is linked to the land by a simple footbridge which in no way detracts from its appearance. I have designed a museum, a reception room for important visitors and a restaurant which will be open to the public. I am pleased with this project, the form of which I visualized whilst out walking, because it emerged from deep within me.

■ *Yet, in looking at your most remarkable works, one has the impression that they have involved many long hours of meticulous research.*

— Like sculpture, architecture demands a certain sensitivity and a capacity to escape from one's surroundings. When I am asked to carry out a project, I always think about it alone, sitting in my office, lying on a couch, or while out walking. Usually the broad outlines of the project come to me fairly quickly; I don't get bogged down in detail. Sometimes my creative

thoughts come to me as if in a dream. My plans for the Mosque in Algiers—which unfortunately has not yet been started owing to lack of funds—actually came to me in my sleep. I imagined it amid the sea, sparkling with beauty. As soon as I awoke, I began to draw it. I conceived the theatre in Brasília during the three days of Carnival. After I had roughed out some sketches early on the fourth day, Ash Wednesday, the project was ready.

I usually draw on a very small scale—something which always seems to surprise my fellow-architects—and then I write an explanatory text in the clearest and simplest possible terms. I don't like looking up complicated terminology in the dictionary. When we were building Brasília, each time President Juscelino Kubitschek read my notes he was immediately able to grasp the thrust of my ideas. Of course, I consult my engineer to see if my project is suited to the terrain, the climate and the budget, so as to be able to make any modifications that might be needed. But that is a purely technical matter, a question of detail. As I am not an engineer or a specialist in reinforced concrete, it is not my job to resolve problems of stress or the resistance of the materials employed. The main thing is for the concept to be there.

■ *What is your current conception of architecture? Has it evolved since Brasília?*
— The new technology now available would perhaps have made it possible to have constructed the buildings of the Square of Three Powers in a different way. But I'm not absolutely certain. Such modifications as I might make today would not necessarily be substantial ones.

Baudelaire once wrote that the unexpected and the irregular, surprise and astonishment are an essential aspect of beauty. I think he was right. An architectural work must be beautiful, light, different. I have always rebelled against predetermined rules, didactic constraints and right angles, which are a rigid, man-made imposition. When that marvellous architect Le Corbusier, the master *par excellence* of my generation, walked up the ramp to the National Congress building, he uttered these words which I have never forgotten: "There is a spirit of invention here."

Imagination is the starting-point in architecture. From the time of the building of Pampulha, on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, in the early 1940s, I wanted to do something different. I had the good fortune to meet Juscelino Kubitschek, a remarkable man full of drive and enthusiasm, who was Mayor of Belo Horizonte at the time. Despite our political differences, we soon became friends. He gave me complete creative freedom and this allowed me room to express myself. An opportunity such as this is very rare in the life of an architect. I have often been attacked because I have questioned all the traditional classicist and rationalist dogmas, but I have remained indifferent to these criticisms.

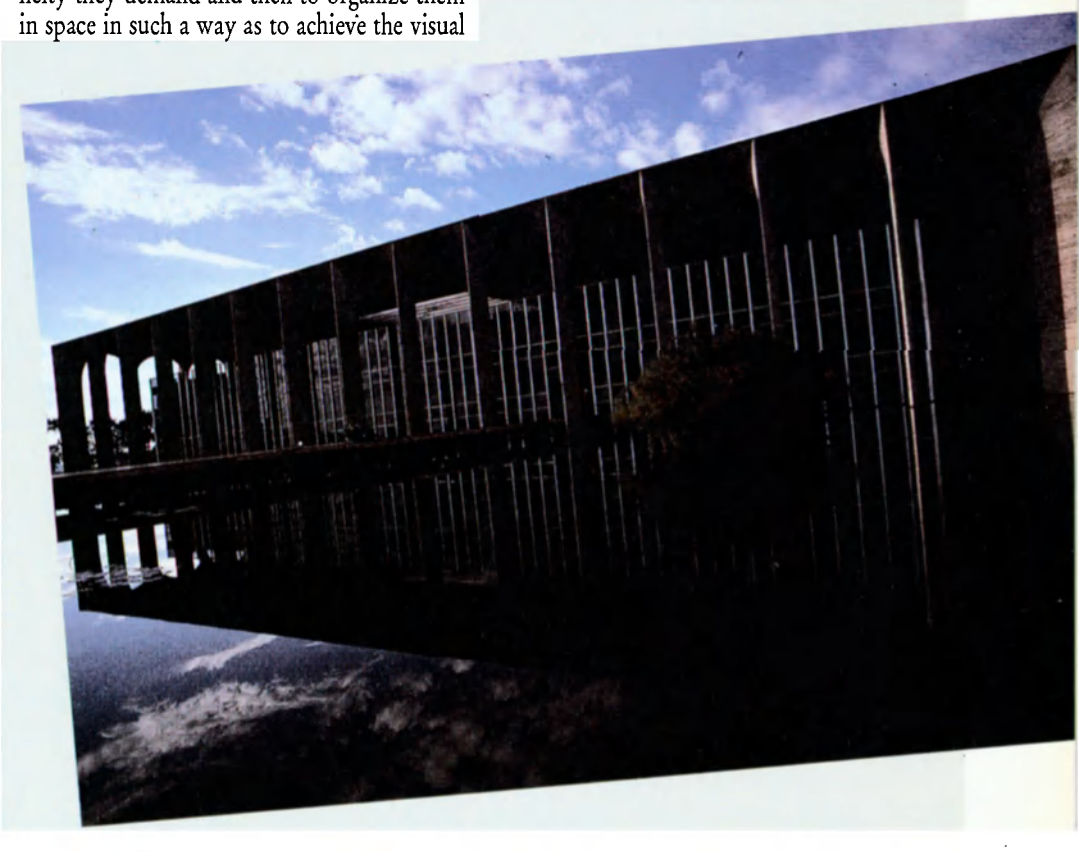
■ *When you speak of imagination, what exactly do you mean? Do you consider your style of architecture to be without precedent?*
— People may not like the monuments and palatial buildings I constructed at Brasília, but no one can say that they have ever seen anything like them before. Some attempts have been made to imitate the Presidential Palace, the Alvorada, and I am flattered, but I don't think imitation should play any part in architecture, with the exception, perhaps, of housing projects. We have to outdo ourselves, to break free from the straitjackets in which we are confined and give free rein to our inventiveness. Heidegger said that reason was the enemy of thought, and therefore of imagination. Beauty in architecture demands freedom, and even more, perhaps, the element of surprise.

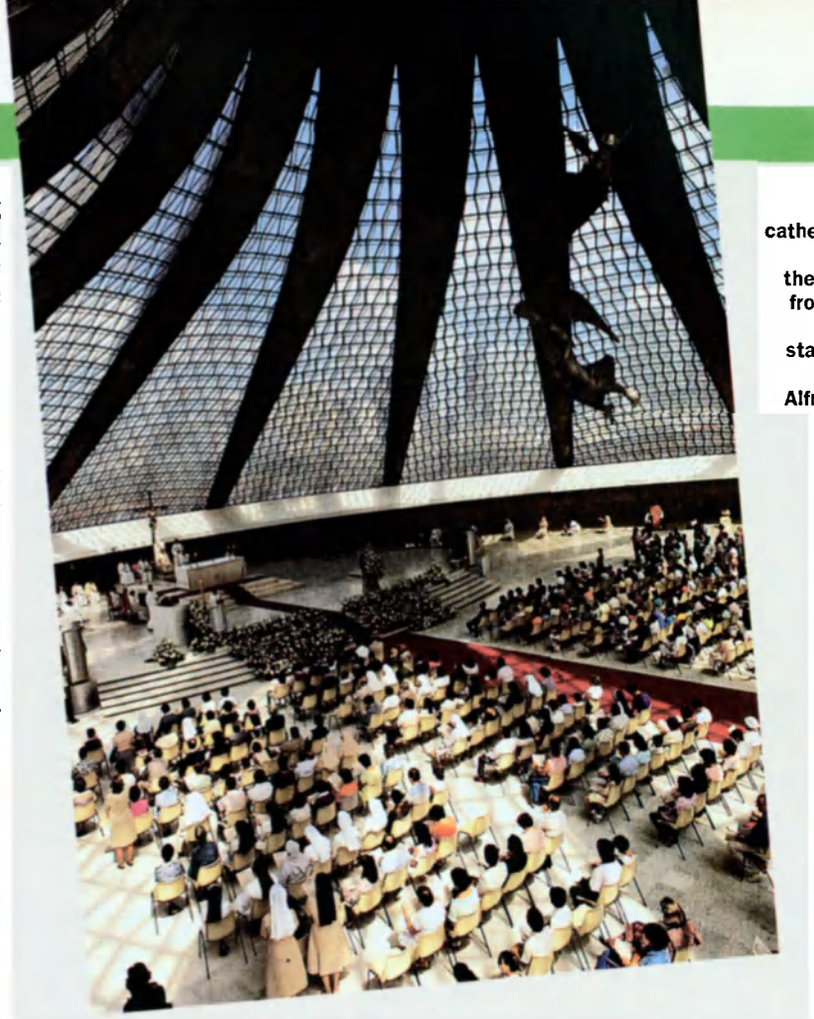
Right angles separate and divide. Personally, I have always loved curves, which are an essential feature of the natural world. It is not easy to draw curves, to give them the spontaneity they demand and then to organize them in space in such a way as to achieve the visual architectural effect that one is looking for. Like Matisse, I maintain that my curves are not gratuitous; they have a meaning. At one point, even Le Corbusier, who had proclaimed the virtues of right angles, began to despise them. In the end he admitted that we were right. One day he said to me: "What you do is baroque, but you do it very well. You have the mountains of Rio in your eyes."

■ *You refer constantly to Le Corbusier. How well did you know him personally?*
— I was working as a member of Lúcio Costa's team when Costa was Director of the School of Fine Arts in Rio de Janeiro. One day, I think it was in 1936, he asked me to accompany him to the airport to meet Le Corbusier. You can imagine what a thrill this was for a young architect. Everyone of my generation in Brazil felt boundless admiration for this man from the old continent, highly cultivated and full of new ideas. Our architecture was strictly classical and lacked originality. With his wisdom and experience Le Corbusier turned everything upside down.

I was barely twenty-nine years old when he produced his design for the Ministry of Education and Public Health in Rio de Janeiro. I already felt that I would be no

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brasília.





Left, inside the cathedral of Brasília. Opposite page, the cathedral seen from outside with, in foreground, statues of the four Evangelists by Alfredo Ceschiatti.

ordinary architect. I had had a gift for drawing from the age of seven and my mother kept all the drawings I had made at school. When Le Corbusier's plans came into my hands, I made a few alterations to them, for my own personal pleasure—for instance I increased the depth of the piles from four metres to ten. This was a piece of teamwork under Le Corbusier's direction, and the final plans took everybody's suggestions into account. We sent them to Le Corbusier for his approval and he had them published in an architectural magazine with his own drawing of the building.

■ *It is often said that you believe that an architect should work alone, without calling on outside collaborators. Yet your projects seem to prove the contrary. At Pampulha, for example, you called in the great Brazilian painter Cândido Portinari.*

— I have always said that it is for the architect to choose the painters or sculptors who will embellish his work. That is what I have done. When I imagine an empty space, a room, or an amphitheatre, I always know in advance whether I shall furnish it with a granite wall, tapestries or paintings. Architecture is a whole which demands a symbiosis between the structure and its decoration. When I built the headquarters of the French Communist Party, in Paris, which is one of my favourite works, Jacques Duclos asked me: "Oscar, I have an old desk of which I am very fond. It has historic associations. Can I put it in my office?" I greatly appreciated his respect for my work as an architect. Such respect is not always shown. I thought that the seats that were put in the nave of the Cathedral of Brasília were really dreadful. The last time I saw Jack Lang, the French Minister of Culture, he asked me: "Are those chairs still there?"

■ *Why was your design for the cathedral of Brasília so totally different from conventional church design? Why did you have a dark entrance-way and a nave flooded with light? The contrast is really striking.*

— I did not want it to be a place of penitence. I am not myself a believer, but I tried to put myself in the shoes of a Christian. Worshippers enter the cathedral down a ramp, a dark, underground passage, before emerging inside the crown-shaped, translucent nave of concrete and glass. To enhance the visual effect and soften the impact of the Sun's rays, I visualized stained-glass panels designed in such a way as not to block out the view of the sky. Marianne Peretti's work on these panels was admirable. Lying flat on the ground in a most uncomfortable position, she drew the sixteen stained-glass panels, each the size of a basketball court. Unlike the Louvre Pyramid in Paris, the nave of the cathedral opens out into space. The first time he saw it, the papal Nuncio said to the Bishop of Brasília: "The architect who created this masterpiece must be a saint to have achieved so close a communion between the Earth and God." As you can imagine, I was very touched by these words and I am still moved when I recall them.

■ *You cannot deny that you are more interested in monumental architecture than you are in designing low-cost housing. Doesn't this indicate a degree of conflict between your political commitment and your work as an architect?*

— I could have earned a lot of money if had let myself be tempted into undertaking paternalistic operations or indulging in property speculation. But that is not in my nature. I am not motivated by profit. I worked on the monumental buildings of Brasília as a salaried civil servant, receiving no commission or under-the-table payments. In this way I felt free and at ease with my work. However, I did design some residential tower blocks in the new Barra da Tijuca district of Rio de Janeiro. I have also recently built some schools, using a design which is beginning to be generally adopted. Although these are prefabricated constructions, I tried to make the most of a restricted budget.

Architecture, like any other profession, is a way of earning a living. But when, as I did, you have a patron of the stature of Juscelino Kubitschek, you have to seize the opportunity to extend and fulfil yourself. I have always refused to follow the mediocre, facile path. Architecture must lead to beauty. The problem is how to achieve that goal without the risk of error. There have been occasions when I have modified a project at the last minute because it lacked perspective or as the result of an acute observation by a friend. I don't think I am an architect who is impervious to outside influence. I am prepared to make any concession or to introduce any note of fantasy that can enhance the plastic beauty of an edifice.

■ *Nevertheless, you are quite categorical when you state that architecture can only be beautiful if it is the fruit of invention or a new departure.*

— I cannot work up any enthusiasm for rationalist architecture, with its functional limitations, its structural rigidity, its dogmas and its theories. Reinforced concrete enables architects with a sense of poetry to express themselves. Architecture is the product of dream and fantasy, curves and large areas of open space. The architect must know how to invent, while making use of all the technology available. Why submit to rules and abstract

principles? When I was working on the monuments of Brasília, I deliberately did not read a single architectural magazine, for fear of being influenced.

What I admire most in an architect is a spirit of liberty. Gaudí, whose best-known work is the Church of the Holy Family in Barcelona, was an architect whose ideas were confused. However, he had the courage to break the established rules and this has given him a special place in modern architecture, even though the role played by Le Corbusier was much more important.

When I designed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Brasília, I did not, as some writers have suggested, branch out into a new form of architecture. I simply wanted to prove that it was easy to create something, using a form of architecture that was technically irreproachable but also generous in spirit, that would please everybody, whatever their aesthetic background. It is not the building that corresponds most closely to my own temperament.

■ *If you had to devise a course for students of architecture, on what principles would you base it?*

— This year I have been asked to produce a series of twelve lectures on video cassette for the new university of Campos, a city of 400,000 inhabitants some 289 kilometres from Rio de Janeiro. I am going to continue the experiment that I began in Algeria in the 1960s, when I was building the university of Constantine.

I think that the most important thing, before students start out on an architectural course, is to find out whether they have a gift for the profession. The teachers must get to know their students, sound them out, discover their artistic leanings and their general background knowledge, get talking to them so that they can point out the hazards of the profession. It is also essential that they know how to draw, since this is basic to architecture. Students should spend six months in a school learning to make technical and decorative drawings; in this way they will develop a sense of beauty. When this stage is completed, they should be attached to a major architectural office where they will learn to study a city from both an architectural and an urban planning point of view. They should be surrounded by people with technical know-how—experts in concrete, air-conditioning, water, and so on. Then, for a period of three years, they should follow, on site, the construction of a town or city, or an urban district, from start to finish. Then all they would have to do would be to learn how to write a clear, concise explanatory report on a project. During my own professional life I have often found that it has been what I wrote rather than what I drew that won approval for a project. Very few non-professionals are capable of understanding an architectural drawing.

■ *Brasília made you world famous, but you have never lived there. Why not?*

— I did, in fact, live there for three years, the time it took to execute my projects. At that time, Brasília was the end of the world. To visit Rio de Janeiro or São Paulo meant a thousand-kilometre journey along muddy roads. I lived in a small room with a bed, a table, two chairs and a cupboard. I had a few friends with me, not all of whom were architects. There were two journalists, a football-player and a poet. At night, for relaxation, we used to strum away on our guitars and sing. We never talked about work. This is my idea of a convivial life. With the workmen with whom we rubbed shoulders, the prostitutes from their wooden huts and the dogs that barked all day long, we all formed one huge family. There was a real frontier atmosphere. We had the feeling that the world was about to change. For the thousands of workers who came from every corner of Brazil, but mainly from the north-east, Brasília spelled hope.

The day in April 1960 when the new capital was inaugurated, in the presence of the President of the Republic and other authorities and personalities, everything changed. The workers found themselves even poorer than they had been before. That was the end of our illusions. As soon as my work was finished, I left. Never again have I experienced the same fraternal atmosphere.

Today, some people criticize Brasília as cold, impersonal, inhuman, empty. But they do not know Brasília. Ask those who live there with their families, ask their children. They like it. They are far from the bustle of the great urban agglomerations. There they can enjoy open spaces and tree-lined avenues. The light from the sky seems to bring with it kindlier ways of living. Lúcio Costa's genius has made the new capital a model of urban planning. As far as I am concerned, I am happy to have been the originator of the principal landmarks of the city. It is not our fault if Brasília has fallen victim to the injustices of the capitalist society.

You might well repeat your question and ask: "Why don't you live there, since the city is built in your image." My reply would be a simple one. I was born in Rio de Janeiro, beside the sea, at the foot of mountains covered in tropical vegetation. I have always lived there. I know that this city is becoming impossible to live in, with its six million inhabitants, its wretched shanty-towns, its violence, its disorder, its polluted beaches and the frenzied activity of daily life. But this is what I am used to. How can you expect me to adapt to anything else? I love Brasília, but at Rio de Janeiro I am at home. ❐

IN PRAISE OF TOLERANCE

The period between the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the Second World War was by and large—in Europe at least—one of optimism. There was a feeling that progress in science and education would gradually make people aware of their civic and moral responsibilities, both in their national communities and in the world at large. Those hopes were dashed when the whole of humanity became engulfed in the most devastating war in history—a war triggered by an ideology of exclusion and intolerance that emerged in one of Europe's most advanced and cultured nations. Optimism retreated and gave way to a far more sceptical, circumspect and vigilant attitude.

The creation in 1946, in the aftermath of that war, of an organization such as UNESCO, dedicated to the construction of lasting peace through education, science and culture, was in part a reflection of this new concern. The tensions between groups, nations and regions in the last forty-six years have amply demonstrated how farsighted UNESCO's founding fathers were. Peace and understanding between peoples are by no means the inevitable outcome of progress in the various spheres of human activity. No society can be safe from the temptation to practise exclusion and intolerance unless it shows constant determination and vigilance.

Even societies which at certain points in their history may have been open-minded and receptive to others are not immune to the risk of lapsing into rigid intolerance. The past has shown only too often that no society, whatever its system of values, can claim to be intrinsically endowed with the virtue of tolerance; conversely, no society can be accused of being permanently intolerant.

Doubtless human beings feel the need of firm convictions. But when required, as they are today, to live in ever closer contact, they should beware lest their convictions lead to bigotry. They must realize that, while they are all equal in dignity, they possess different talents and convictions, and that this difference is a source of enrichment for every one of them, and for civilization. Provided, that is, that everyone accepts a nucleus of universal values.

The challenge facing us both now and in the future is to accept that each of the five and a half billion human beings living on the planet today can have his or her own ideas and preferences, and, without denying those ideas and preferences, can admit that those of others are just as worthy of respect. It is by relentlessly striving to practise what the British philosopher Bernard Williams calls this "awkward virtue" that we shall really begin to work for peace.

EHSAN NARAGHI
Consultant for this issue

EHSAN NARAGHI, founder of the Teheran Institute of Social Research and currently an adviser to UNESCO, is an Iranian sociologist and historian. His published works include *L'Orient et la crise de L'Occident* (Paris, 1977) and *Des palais du chah aux prisons de la révolution* (Paris, 1991).

An awkward virtue

BY BERNARD WILLIAMS

***Peace-lover* (1987), a painted terracotta sculpture by the Iraqi artist Dhia Azzawi.**

THE difficulty with tolerance is that it seems to be at once necessary and impossible. It is necessary where different groups have conflicting beliefs—moral, political or religious—and realize that there is no alternative to their living together; no alternative, that is to say, except armed conflict, which will not resolve their disagreements and will impose continuous suffering. These are the circumstances in which tolerance is necessary. Yet in those same circumstances it may well seem impossible.

If violence and the breakdown of social co-operation are threatened in these circumstances, it is because people find others' beliefs or ways of life deeply unacceptable. In matters of religion, for instance (which, historically, was the first area in which the idea of tolerance was used), the need for tolerance arises because one of the groups, at least, thinks that the other is blasphemously, disastrously, obscenely wrong. The members of one group may also think, very often, that the leaders or elders of the other group are keeping the young, or perhaps the women, from enlightenment and liberation. In this case, they see it as not merely in their own group's interest, but in the interest of some in the other group, that the true religion (as they believe it to be) should prevail. It is because the disagreement goes this deep that the parties to it think that they cannot accept the existence of each other. We need to tolerate other people and their ways of life only in situations that make it very difficult to do so. Tolerance, we may say, is required only for the intolerable. That is its basic problem.

We may think of tolerance as an attitude that a more powerful group, or a majority, may have (or may fail to have) towards a less powerful group or a minority. In a country where there are many Christians and few Muslims, there may be a question whether the Christians tolerate the Muslims; the Muslims do not get the choice, so to speak, whether to tolerate the Christians or not. If the proportions of Christians and Muslims are reversed, so will be the direction of tolerance. This is how we usually think of tolerance, and it is natural to do so, because discussions of tolerance have often been discussions of what laws should exist—in particular, laws permitting or forbidding various kinds of religious practice—and the laws have been determined by the attitudes of the more powerful group. But more basically, tolerance is a matter of the attitudes of any group to another, and does not concern only the relations of the more powerful to the less powerful. A group or a creed can rightly be said to be "intolerant" if it would like to suppress or drive out others, even if, as a matter of fact, it has no power to do so. The real problems of tolerance are to be found at the level of human relations and of the attitude of one way of life towards another; it is not only a question of how the power of the state is used.

If there is to be a question of tolerance, it is necessary that there should be *something to be tolerated:* there has to be some belief or practice or way of life that one group may think (however fanatically or unreasonably) to be wrong, or mistaken, or undesirable. If one group simply hates another, as with a clan vendetta or cases of sheer racism, it is not really tolerance that is needed: the people involved need rather to lose their hatred, their prejudice, or their implacable memories. If we are asking people to be tolerant, we are asking for

something more complicated than this. They will indeed have to lose something, their desire to suppress or drive out the rival belief; but they will also keep something, their commitment to their own beliefs, which is what gave them that desire in the first place. There is a tension here between one's own commitments, and the acceptance that other people may have other and perhaps quite distasteful commitments: the tension that is typical of tolerance, and which makes it so difficult.

In practice, of course, there is often a very thin or vague boundary between mere tribalism or clan loyalty, and differences in outlook or conviction. As Northern Ireland, for instance, constantly reminds us, an old enemy may appear not merely as an enemy but as an opponent in the struggle for truth and enlightenment.

AN ACTIVE TENSION

Just because tolerance involves this tension between commitment to one's own outlook and acceptance of the other's, it is not, in its true sense, the same as mere weariness or indifference. After the European wars of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had raged for years, people began to think that it must be better for the different Christian churches to coexist. Various attitudes went with this development. Some people became sceptical about the distinctive claims of any church, and began to think that there was no truth, or at least no truth discoverable by human beings, about the validity of one church's creed as opposed to another's. Other people began to think that the struggles had helped them to understand God's purposes better: that He did not mind how people worshipped, so long as they did so in good faith within certain broad Christian limits. (In more recent times, a similar ecumenical spirit has extended beyond the boundaries of Christianity.)

These two lines of thought in a certain sense went in opposite directions. One of them, the sceptical, claimed that there was less to be known about God's designs than the warring parties, each with its particular fanaticism, had supposed. The other line of thought, the broad church view, claimed to have a better insight into God's designs than the warring parties had. But in their relation to the battles of faith, the two lines of thought did nevertheless end up in the same position, with the idea that precise questions of Christian belief did not matter as much as people had supposed; that less was at stake. This leads to tolerance as a matter of political practice, and that is an extremely important result; but as an attitude, it is less than tolerance. If you do not care all that much what anyone believes, you do not need the attitude of tolerance, any more than you do with regard to other people's tastes in food.

In many matters, attitudes that are more tolerant in practice do arise for this reason, that people cease to think that a certain kind of behaviour is a matter for disapproval or negative judgement at all. This is what is happening, in many parts of the world, with regard to kinds of sexual behaviour that were previously discouraged and in some cases legally punished. An extra-marital relationship or a homosexual ménage may arouse no hostile comment or reaction, as such things did in the past. But once again, though this is tolerance as a matter of practice, the attitude it relies on is indifference rather than, strictly speaking, tolerance. Indeed, if I and others in the neighbourhood said that we were *tolerating* the homosexual relations of the couple next door, our attitude would be thought to be less than liberal.

There are no doubt many conflicts and areas of intolerance for which the solution should indeed be found in this direction—in the increase of indifference. Matters of sexual and social behaviour which in smaller and more traditional societies are of great public concern will come to seem more a private matter, raising in themselves no question of right or wrong. The slide towards indifference may also provide, as it did in Europe, the only solution to some religious disputes. Not all religions, of course, have any desire to convert, let alone coerce, others. They no doubt have some opinion or other (perhaps of the "broad church" type) about the state of truth or error of those who do not share their faith, but at any rate they are content to leave those other people alone. Other creeds, however, are less willing to allow error, as they see it, to flourish, and it may be that with them there is no solution except that which Europe discovered (in religion, at least, if not in politics)—a decline in enthusiasm. It is important that a decline of enthusiasm does not take the form of a movement's merely running out of steam. As the various sects of Christianity discovered,

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BROTHERS IN FAITH

From the moment when worship illuminates the soul of a man, whatever his race, his soul takes on the lustre of the mystical "diamond". Neither his colour nor his birth are of any relevance.

SALIF TALL TIERNO-BOKAR (1884-1948), AFRICA

Quotations relating to the main theme of this issue have been taken from *La tolérance, essai d'anthologie*, an anthology of writings on tolerance chosen and presented by Zaghloul Morsy (UNESCO, latest edition 1988).

Eloge de la liberté **(c. 1926), oil on canvas, by the German-born painter Max Ernst.**

a religion may have its own resources for rethinking its relations to others. One relevant idea, which had considerable influence in Europe, is that an expansive religion really wants people to believe in it, but it must recognize that this is not a result that can be achieved by force. The most that force can achieve is acquiescence and outer conformity. As Hegel said of the slave's master, the fanatic is always disappointed: what he wanted was acknowledgement, but all he can get is conformity.

THE IDEAL OF AUTONOMY

However, neither a decline in enthusiasm nor a retreat into private taste can solve all problems. If everything becomes a matter of private judgement or taste, people lose a sense of social identity and of belonging to a community whose interests reach beyond their own. To some degree, it is possible for people to belong to communities bound together by shared convictions—religious convictions, for instance—and tolerance be sustained by a distinction between those communities and the state. The state is not identified with any set of such beliefs, and does not enforce any of them; equally, it does not allow any of the groups to impose its beliefs on the others, though each of them may of course advocate what it believes. In the United States, for instance, there is a virtually universal consensus that supports the Constitution in allowing no law that enforces or even encourages any particular religion. There are many religious groups, and no doubt many of them have deep convictions, but none

A medley of signs by the Tunisian painter Gouider Triki (gouache on paper).

of them wants the state to suppress others, or to allow any of them to suppress others.

Many people have hoped that this can serve as a general model of the way in which a modern society can resolve the tensions of tolerance. On the one hand, there are deeply held and differing convictions about moral or religious matters, held by various groups within the society. On the other hand, there is a supposedly impartial state, which affirms the rights of every citizen to equal consideration, including an equal right to form and express his or her convictions. This is the model of *liberal pluralism*. It can be seen as enacting tolerance. It expresses tolerance's peculiar combination of conviction and acceptance, by finding a home for people's various convictions in groups or communities less than the state, while the acceptance of diversity is located in the structure of the state itself.

This is not to say that there is no need of any shared beliefs. Clearly there must be a shared belief in the system itself. The model of a society that is held together by a framework of rights and an aspiration towards equal respect, rather than by a shared body of more specific substantive convictions, demands an ideal of citizenship that will be adequate to bear such a weight. The most impressive version of that ideal is perhaps that offered by the tradition of liberal philosophy flowing from Kant, which identifies the dignity of the human being with autonomy. A free person is one who makes his or her own life and determines his or her own

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convictions, and power must be used to make this possible, not to frustrate it by imposing a given set of convictions.

This is not a purely negative or sceptical ideal. If it were, it could not even hope to have the power to bind together into one society people with strongly differing convictions. Nor could it provide the motive power that all tolerant societies need in order to fight, when other means fail, the intolerant.

There must be, on any showing, limits to the extent to which the liberal state can be disengaged on matters of ethical disagreement. There are some questions, such as that of abortion, on which the state will fail to be neutral whatever it does. Its laws may draw distinctions between different circumstances of abortion, but in the end it cannot escape the fact that some people will believe with the deepest conviction that a certain class of acts should be permitted, while other people will believe with equal conviction that those acts should be forbidden. No society can avoid collective and substantive choices on matters of that kind, and in that sense, on those issues, there are limits to tolerance, even if people continue to respect one another's opinions.

Some critics of liberalism claim that the liberal pluralist state, as the supposed enactment of tolerance, does not really exist. What is happening, they say, is that the state is subtly enforcing one set of principles (roughly in favour of social co-operation and business efficiency) while the convictions that people previously deeply held, on matters of religion or sexual behaviour or the significance of cultural experience, dwindle into private tastes. Other critics will admit that the liberal pluralist state does exist and to some extent succeeds in expressing tolerance, but will insist that tolerance is at best one political virtue, to be weighed against other goods such as the satisfactions of a deeply experienced sense of community, or of a society in which people's rights (or the lack of them) are taken for granted, rather than constantly staked out with fences of litigation and explicit argument.

I suspect that only the future will show whether liberal societies can preserve a variety of strong convictions on important matters. Perhaps it will show, too, how much it matters to humanity if that variety, and so all but a few convictions, fades away. Maybe tolerance will prove to have been an interim virtue, serving a period between a past when no-one had heard of it, and a future in which no-one will need it. For the present, however, it is very obvious that there are still fanatical convictions that are only too anxious to insulate themselves against criticism; and there are many people whose rights can be asserted only by unwelcome speech. It does not look as though the time has come yet in which we can do without the awkward virtue of tolerance. ❐

A dramatic scene from the film version of the famous American musical *West Side Story* (1961), directed by Robert Wise.

Voltaire, crusader against tyranny

BY JEAN LESSAY

Above and following pages: sketches by the Swiss painter and engraver Jean Huber (1721-1786) show Voltaire in a variety of moods.
Below, *Voltaire pledging his support to the Calas family*, an engraving by Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret (1782-1863).

IN social terms a value, and in those who practice it a virtue, tolerance nevertheless seems to have been a new idea in the eighteenth century. This may not seem to square with the usual stereotype of that period, which in Europe was supposedly marked by great sophistication in all the arts, lively intellectual curiosity and brilliant social life. But it becomes less surprising when we recall that the wars of religion were then still fresh in everyone's memory, and that fanaticism, albeit in retreat, was not yet dead.

Conversation in the salons was unfettered, but in France many books were forbidden, seized and destroyed. Some unconventional opinions and behaviour were connived at, but that is not to say that they were tolerated: tolerating means accepting the existence of that which is different. Many men tolerant by instinct and conviction were to be found even among princes and potentates, but that did not stop fanaticism from rearing its head under cover of the institutions. Exclusion and persecution stemmed partly from the automatic enforcement of laws, even those privately regarded as outdated, and partly from the demands of a section of public opinion which used minorities as scapegoats for its own frustrations and its taste for violence.

The word tolerance was still viewed with caution, mistrust and sometimes hostility. Though the Encyclopaedists had already had a

JEAN LESSAY,
a French writer specializing in the American Revolution, published studies on Lafayette (Paris, 1983), Washington (Paris, 1985) and the Count of Rivarol, a royalist in the age of the French Revolution (Paris, 1989). He wrote the present article shortly before his recent death.

profound influence in educated circles, there were still theologians ready to defend intolerance—in the most spectacular form it took in France, namely the prohibition of Protestantism by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The negative effects of this measure were still deeply felt several decades afterwards, both in the intellectual sphere (in the form of a brain drain) and in the economy (in the form of an exodus of skilled craftsmen to work abroad).

The advent of tolerance, or rather its recognition as a factor for civil peace and a safeguard against injustice, was largely the work of philosophers, from Pierre Bayle (a refugee in Holland) to Diderot, d'Alembert, d'Holbach, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and especially Voltaire, who was its real champion.

THE CALAS AFFAIR

From his earliest days as a playwright, Voltaire (1694-1778) indirectly attacked the scourge of fanaticism that he was to fight throughout his life. Thus in 1728, in his epic poem *La Henriade*, he praised King Henri IV for setting out to be the wise, enlightened monarch of all Frenchmen, whatever their beliefs. The concept of tolerance he tackled directly in his *Lettres philosophiques* (1734), his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1766) and his *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1772). Three years before his death, under the title *Le cri du sang innocent* ("The cry of innocent blood"), he was to petition Louis XVI to review the trial of a victim of fanaticism whose cause he made famous, the Chevalier de la Barre.[1]

His main contribution to this war of ideas, however, is still his *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763). The exceptional importance of this text, apart from the cogency of its arguments, lies in the fact that Voltaire's treatise, unlike John Locke's *Letter on Toleration* (1690), to which he pays tribute, is not simply a philosophical dissertation. Thought here stemmed from action, from what we would nowadays describe as the writer's "commitment". For over a year Voltaire had been waging an unremitting campaign to secure the rehabilitation of a fabric merchant from Toulouse, Jean Calas, a Protestant falsely accused of murdering his son. Calas was sentenced to death, and in 1762 was broken on the wheel after refusing to confess under torture. Actually a majority of the judges were out to gratify an ignorant fanatical crowd, which accused Jean Calas, without a shred of evidence, simply because on the basis of hearsay it ascribed to Protestants a duty to kill their children if they intended to convert to Catholicism. This was supposedly the situation of the unfortunate son, Marc-Antoine Calas: in actual fact he committed suicide.

Voltaire dissected out all the intricacies of this iniquitous business, and stirred up France and Europe. Though the press then existed only in an embryonic state (France had fewer than twelve newspapers), it is no exaggeration to speak of a media triumph; the role of the media was played by salons, clubs, cafés and private correspondence. The Calas affair to a large extent foreshadowed the Dreyfus case at the end of the nineteenth century: a nation was aroused by the decision of an ordinary tribunal which was regarded as an injustice.

Voltaire won over all liberal-minded people in France, even those in circles close to the Court, in favour of a formal review of the verdict and the payment of compensation to the innocent victim's family, and thus gained public acceptance of three points: that judges can make mistakes; when they do, they must unequivocally admit as much and take the consequences; if a minority is not respected, offenders are likely to be sought first among its ranks.

Though no one religion had a monopoly of fanaticism, the ultimate in intolerance (political ideologies did not yet exist), after Louis XIV's decision to deprive Protestants of all their rights, including that of possessing a civic status, Voltaire came to regard France as fertile ground for all the abuses of fanaticism.

1. Beheaded at Abbeville in 1766 for an "impious crime", though no evidence of it was ever adduced.

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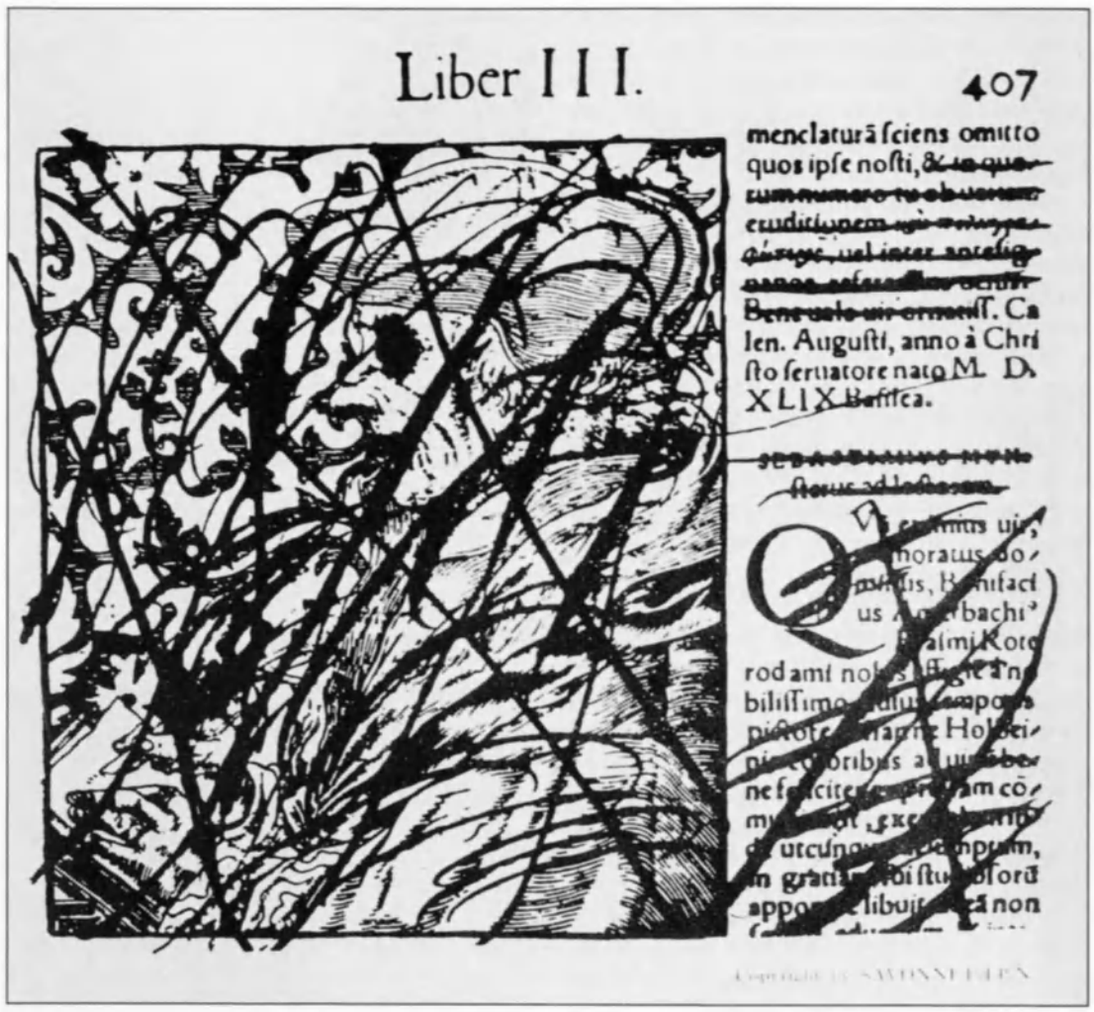
THE STRANGER

Everyone who turneth aside the judgement of the stranger is as though he turned aside the judgement of God.

THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD. TREATISE OF CHAGIGAH, 5A

A page of Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia universalis* (1544) illustrated with a portrait of Erasmus. The *Cosmographia*, which put forward original ideas about the Earth's physical features, was censored by the Inquisition.



He recalled that between 1745 and 1762 eight Protestant pastors had been hanged for preaching according to their faith, and hundreds of their followers sent to the hulks. This situation, according to him, could not arise in England, Germany or Holland, for in those countries religious pluralism existed and members of different faiths could "live as brothers and contribute equally to the good of society". Doubtless Voltaire painted a somewhat idealized picture of what went on in those countries as regards freedom of belief, but he did so in order to condemn the laws in France, where "abuse of the most holy religion has produced a great crime [the Calas affair]". Hence it is "important for the human race to consider whether religion should be charitable or barbaric."

A UNIVERSAL VALUE AND VIRTUE

In order to denounce fanaticism, which runs counter to the spirit of the Gospels, the writer presented a brief survey of religious customs in Europe and Asia since Antiquity. According to Voltaire, neither the Greeks nor the Romans persecuted individuals on the grounds that their beliefs offended the local deities. The Athenians even took tolerance to the point of building an altar dedicated to foreign gods they were unacquainted with; and the Romans very wisely held the view that it was for the gods themselves to worry about offences committed against them. If Christians were martyred in the empire, it was not on account of their beliefs, but because they disturbed public order.

Voltaire saw evidence of this desire to let people believe what they wished even in the Old Testament. Not greatly enamoured of the Hebrews of the Bible, nor yet of the ancient Egyptians, he nevertheless saw "rays of universal tolerance" shining out through the story of Moses's followers. The Emperors of China and Japan also tolerated a variety of beliefs when this did not endanger the state. "Go to India", he wrote, "or Persia, or Tartary, and you will see there the same tolerance and the same serenity."

He did not attack any religion, for "wherever there is an established society, a religion is necessary; the laws guard against known crimes and religion against secret ones." But religion, essentially benign itself, is corrupted by superstition and tolerance. "Superstition is to religion what astrology is to astronomy—the very foolish daughter of a very wise mother."

To combat superstition and intolerance is the task of reason, the reason that "daily spreads in France, into the merchants' shops and the noblemen's houses;" it is for reason to demonstrate the inanity of ridiculous,

monstrous practices such as the Inquisition—whose very name, the Abbé Grégoire was later to say, is an offence against the Gospel—forced or bought conversions, and *autos-da-fé*.

The author of the *Traité sur la tolérance* regarded the review of the Calas trial as a victory for philosophy, and this can hardly be denied. He says that all beliefs should have an opportunity to express themselves "It would be foolish to claim to bring all men to think in the same way about metaphysics. It would be far easier to subjugate the entire universe by force of arms than to subjugate the minds of every dweller in a single town." In his conception of tolerance he goes further than John Locke, who in his famous 1690 letter excluded papists and atheists from it; but he still does not present a materialist or atheist view. For him atheism, far from being synonymous with tolerance, can on the contrary drift into fanaticism like any religion. "A rational atheist who was fiery and powerful," he wrote, "would be just as disastrous as a bloodthirsty superstitious man."

Tolerance, the antithesis of fanaticism, is respect for others in their difference from oneself. Paul Valéry was surely right to say that it "can only be conceived, and make its way into law and customs, in an advanced age, when people have gradually enriched and enfeebled themselves by the interchange of their differences."

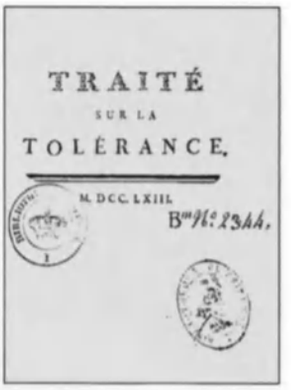
For Voltaire, this value/virtue also contains an element of gentleness and benevolence, and he often uses the word "indulgent" to mean tolerant. "What is needed to be happy in the next life is to be just. To be happy in this one, insofar as the poverty of our nature permits, what is needed . . . is to be indulgent."

According to him, the fight against intolerance requires recourse to irony and humour, in order to bring out its grotesque inconsistencies. Thus we need to demonstrate the absurdity of condemning those whose opinions differ from ours to punishment in the next world, whilst having to maintain courteous relations with these same people for purposes of living together. "Fanaticism is not merely horrible, it is absurd."

In 1787, twenty-four years after the publication of the *Traité sur la tolérance,* Louis XVI signed the Edict of Toleration, which gave Protestants a civic status which at last allowed them to get married, make wills and inherit, like the rest of his subjects. This was only a modest step forward, but in the right direction. Voltaire had cleared the way. His aim, however, was not merely to enable a category of French citizens to be given back the rights they had been unjustly deprived of: he claimed tolerance as a universal value. No people on Earth, no individual, should suffer for lack of it. His words are uncompromising: "I say to you that we must regard all men as our brothers. What, a Turk my brother? A Chinaman my brother? A Jew? A Siamese? Yes, without doubt: are we not all children of the same Father, and creatures of the same God? But these peoples despise us, and call us idolators! Well, I shall say to them that they are quite wrong."

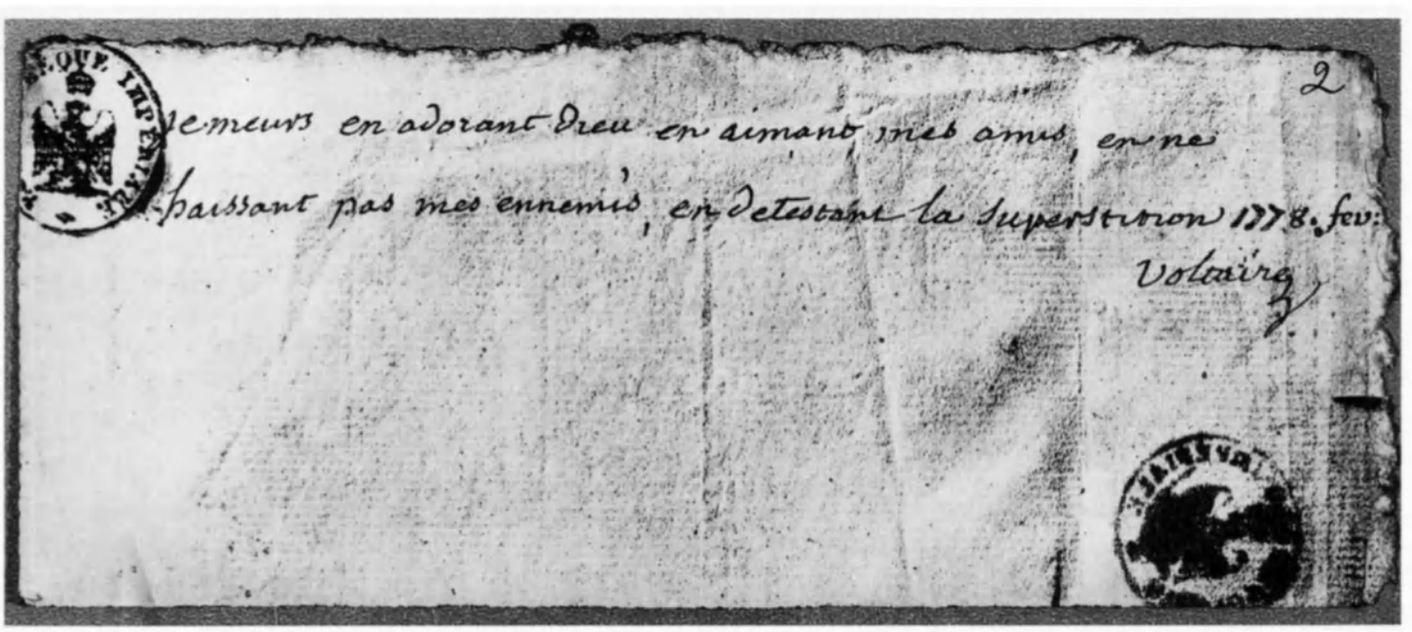
Eleven years after the writer's death, freedom of thought and expression, for whose recognition he had battled so hard, were on 26 August 1789 proclaimed to the world by the National Constituent Assembly in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen. In Articles 10 and 11 of this Declaration, which claimed to be universal, tolerance in the widest sense of the term at last found its philosophical and legal basis—although the word itself was not used.

All that remained was for people to show tolerance to their fellows in daily life. But will this struggle ever be won? ❐


TRAITÉ
SUR LA
TOLÉRANCE.
M. DCC. LXIII.
B^me N.^o 2344.

Title page of the first edition of Voltaire's celebrated work, published in 1763.

Below, one of the last thoughts written down by Voltaire, a few months before his death in 1778: "I die worshipping God, loving my friends, hating not my enemies and detesting superstition."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Je meurs en adorant Dieu en aimant mes amis, en ne
haissant pas mes ennemis, en detestant la superstition 1778. fev:
Voltaire

Gandhi and the struggle for non-violence

BY **RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO**

IT is impossible to discuss the subject of tolerance today without referring to the thought and action of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948), known to the world as Mahatma ("great soul"). Yet the word tolerance appears only rarely in his works even though his whole life proved him to be a man of exemplary tolerance. This paradox is an indication of the difficulty of the concept.

According to Gandhi, to affirm one's tolerance is to establish a hierarchy between one's own position and that of others. "I do not like the word tolerance", he wrote in a letter to his followers in 1930 while he was imprisoned at Yeravda Mandir, "but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahimsa* [non-violence] teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter. This admission will readily be made by a seeker of Truth, who follows the law of love.

"If we had attained the full vision of truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God. But being only seekers, we prosecute our quest, and are conscious of our imperfection."

Here we touch on one of the basic principles of Gandhi's philosophy. We are in an area of spiritual theory in which the very concept of tolerance is situated, not in relation to a given political or religious context, but in relation to a belief in the liberty of human conscience. Gandhi demands more than just respect for another human being; he seeks to encourage the quest for truth, whilst being convinced that this quest is inseparable from obedience to the law of love. Thus, for Gandhi, it is impossible to evoke the concept of tolerance without affirming the notion of truth. This is a crucial point, but it is even more important to understand that truth can only be respected through the path of non-violence.

The terms "non-violence" and "truth" are so closely allied as to be virtually interchangeable. "*Ahimsa* and truth", wrote Gandhi, "are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them. They are like the

The champion of non-violence towards the end of his life, in the midst of a crowd of respectful admirers.

two sides of a coin, or rather a smooth unstamped metallic disc. Who can say which side is the obverse and which the reverse?

"Nevertheless, *ahimsa* is the means; Truth is the end. Means to be means must always be within our reach, and so *ahimsa* is our supreme duty. If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later. When once we have grasped this point, final victory is beyond question."

THE SEED AND THE TREE

Gandhi does not seek to establish a rational explanation of the world on the basis of the notion of truth, or to favour a traditional line of thought. "Truth resides in every human heart", he declares, "and one has to search for it there. . . . But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth." It is, therefore, impossible to separate religious life from political life, as is shown by the way in which Gandhi organized his struggle both against British repression and against the injustice done to the untouchables by the Indian caste system. Following the Socratic example, Gandhi bravely confronted the spirit of tyranny and intolerance of his contemporaries with no other weapons than fasting and prayer. "The only tyrant I accept is the 'still small voice' within me, And even though I have to face the prospect of a

minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority."

By acting on the basis of these principles, the Mahatma rid himself of all political reservations. On the contrary, the standpoint he adopted aimed to ensure the victory of the humanitarian approach over the political approach, which seeks to put ideological values before the values of the community. His unwavering concern for truth and for the equality of all citizens led him to revolt against tricks and lies which he judged to be ignoble means to noble ends. "Your belief that there is no connection between the means and the ends is a great mistake", he wrote. "Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes. Your reasoning is the same as saying that we can get a rose through planting a noxious weed. . . . The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."

And he continued: "I am more concerned with preventing the brutalization of human nature than with the prevention of the sufferings of my own people. I know that people who voluntarily undergo a course of suffering raise themselves and the whole of humanity; but I also know that people who become brutalized in their desperate efforts to get victory

Gandhi and members of his staff during the years he spent as a lawyer in South Africa (1893-1914).

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over their opponents or to exploit weaker nations or weaker men, not only drag down themselves but mankind also."

In other words, the "political virtue" of non-violence (which Gandhi sees as the ultimate virtue) stems from the fact that it unites the members of the community by stressing the role of the individual and by underlining the decisive effect of that catharsis, or purification, that we must exercise upon our bodies and our minds. Thus our capacity to play a part in public affairs and to judge what is just and what is unjust is entirely dependent upon the individual and collective practice of non-violence. The finest lesson we can learn from the philosophy of Gandhi is that, for the individual and the community, policies that make power the criterion of truth can only lead to disastrous consequences.

THE WORLDWIDE INFLUENCE OF GANDHI

Fully aware of the dangers of political power but also of the democratic duty he had to fulfil in India, Gandhi declared: "If I seem to take

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THE CONFESSION OF THE DECEASED

I have not deprived the orphan of his property.
I have not done what the gods detest.
I have not calumniated a servant to his master.
I have not caused pain.
I have not made suffering for anyone. . . .
I have not made to weep.
I have not killed.
I have not commanded to kill.

The Book of the Dead, Ancient Egypt

part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish, therefore, to wrestle with the snake. . . . My work will be finished, if I succeed in carrying conviction to the human family that every man or woman, however weak in body, is the guardian of his or her self-respect and liberty. This defence avails, even though the whole world may be against the individual resister."

The influence of Gandhi's teachings has been felt throughout the world. Martin Luther King's struggle for the rights of black Americans is a particularly notable example of it. From the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955 to the march on Washington in 1963, King adopted Gandhi's non-violent techniques in all his protest actions.

Martin Luther King described Gandhi's influence in his book *Strength to Love*: "The whole Gandhian concept of *satyagraha*[1] was profoundly significant for me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my scepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time that the Christian doctrine of love, operating through the Gandhian method of non-violence, is one of the most potent weapons available to an oppressed people in their struggle for freedom." He added: "If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable."

In 1968, the year of his death, these prophetic words of Martin Luther King were borne out in the non-violent resistance of the people of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet invasion. From then on, non-violence was inseparably linked to the various political and intellectual movements that for ten years bubbled up in the Eastern countries. As Lech Walesa declared in the 1980s, when he headed the Polish Solidarity trade union whose strikes brought about the downfall of the totalitarian régime in his country: "The only way we can oppose violence is to refuse to use it ourselves. . . . We have no other weapons than truth and faith."

The people of the Philippines also adopted the non-violent option in 1986 in their campaign of civil disobedience against dictatorial rule. Since then, various forms of non-violent action in Latin America, South Africa and the Middle East have shown the topicality and the relevance of the Gandhian heritage in the fight for freedom and justice. ❐

1. Literally, holding on to truth. Name given by Gandhi to the technique of non-violent resistance as practised by him and under his guidance. *Editor*

Martin Luther King on his return to the United States after receiving the Nobel Peace Prize (1964).

GREENWATCH

THE UNESCO COURIER - JUNE 1992

EDITORIAL

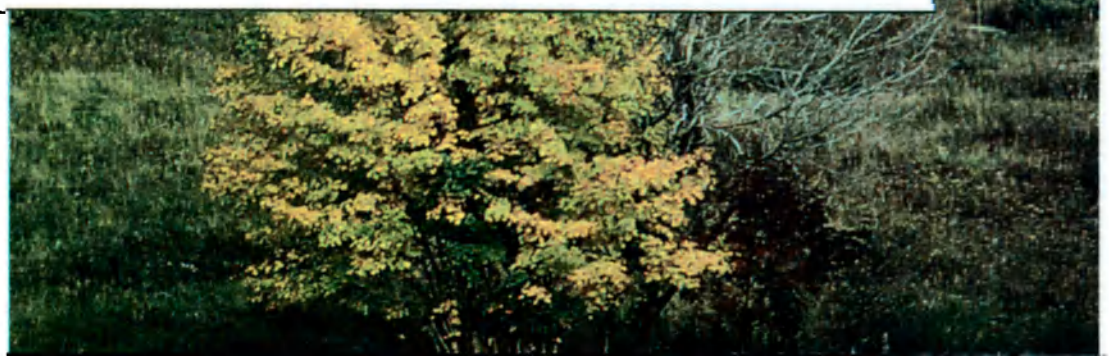
Towards a new world ecological order?

In this month of June 1992, the Earth is not quite as round as usual, for it has sprouted a summit in Rio de Janeiro which is by now probably even more famous than that city's other peak, the Sugarloaf Mountain. From 3 to 14 June, 166 heads of state and government and thousands of delegates will be in Rio, gathered round the bedside of our ailing planet. We have treated the Earth very badly. Pollution has taken a heavy toll, what with the greenhouse effect and the ensuing risk of rising sea-levels, the hole in the ozone layer and nuclear hazards.

Pricking people's consciences is a painful process. A heavy price has to be paid for industrial growth and the provision of modern amenities. How are we going to foot the bill? Will the main beneficiaries of these forms of progress be prepared to make the necessary sacrifices? And will those who have hitherto been left out at last begin to reap the benefits or will they be penalized for appearing on the scene too late? The preparatory meeting for the Rio Summit, held in New York, led to agreement on the draft of an Earth Charter and on Agenda 21, defining sustainable development for the coming century, from the protection of forests to the management of toxic wastes. Yet, even if there is a majority in favour of the broad principles, how will it be possible to reconcile all the points of view?

We need only take one example that is symptomatic of the situation. The people living in the North rightly denounce the damage caused by CFCs, chemical compounds widely used in refrigeration systems, and are demanding—again quite rightly from a strictly environmental standpoint—that they should be banned. But what about the people in the South? How will they react to the prospect of being denied this modern amenity just when they thought they would be about to enjoy its benefits?

It has been estimated that it will cost $125 billion a year to implement the resolutions set forth in Agenda 21. Again, who is going to foot the bill? Whether the Rio Summit turns out to be a display of psychological shadow-boxing, an unqualified success or simply a point of departure, the fact remains that it is the first of its kind. It will at least have had the virtue of taking place. ■



In this issue the usual architecture of the *Unesco Courier* has been modified, with the introduction of a new section entitled **Greenwatch** which appears in addition to the main theme and the regular features. **Greenwatch** is a kind of magazine within the magazine. From its position on the eight central pages it surveys, as its title suggests, current developments relating to a world issue of paramount importance —the environment and its survival. Its first appearance coincides with the Earth Summit being held by the United Nations in Rio de Janeiro, a conference of crucial importance for the planet. Like the main body of the magazine, **Greenwatch** contains an interview (in this case with a leading specialist in ecology) and a round-up of short news items, as well as a longer article on a major environmental issue (the depletion of the ozone layer) and an extract from a classic text evoking the relationship between humankind and nature (the story of the flood from the Gilgamesh Epic of 3,500 years ago) ■

THE EARTH SUMMIT

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which is being held this month in Rio de Janeiro, will be seeking to spell out, twenty years after the Stockholm Conference, the measures that need to be taken to protect the Earth, the only "living" planet of the solar system. In addition to the plenary sessions to which Heads of State have been invited, there will be more than 250 meetings, seminars, workshops, lectures and other events, which some 10,000 people are expected to attend. One particularly important venue will be the International Forum of Non-governmental Organizations, since the NGOs, with their flexible working methods, are eminently suited to be partners in furthering the development process and ensuring the protection of nature. Among the lecture series that are being held, one will set out to compare the methods of sustainable natural resource management used by indigenous peoples. ■

Bookshelf

UNDERSTANDING DESERTIFICATION

Deserts occupy about one fifth of the Earth's land surface, an area of approximately 30 million square kilometres. They are natural creations which have always existed, but today many of them are spreading. This process of "desertification" results largely from human activities which cause degradation of the land, reduce its fertility and make it unfit even for grazing. Desertification affects certain regions in the developed countries (USA, Canada, Australia), but it is most acute in the developing countries (in the Sahel, in South America and in the Mediterranean basin, as well as in India, Pakistan and Mexico). The problem has been aggravated in these areas by the pressures of rapid demographic growth.

Desertification, its causes, effects and possible ways of combating it are the subject of a "Teaching Module on Desertification", by C. Souchon and J.P. Deleage, published by Unesco and the United Nations Environment Programme as No. 16 in their Environmental Education Series (available in French and Spanish only). The example taken is the Sahel. The main themes covered include: The interactions of peoples with their environment; water; soils and crops; cattle-raising and grazing-land management; energy, firewood and deforestation; general problems of planning and management.

The booklet proposes a number of practical exercises to increase pupils' awareness of the state of the environment in their region. In addition to educators and their pupils, the booklet also makes a useful working tool for all those with an interest in the Sahel, such as technical assistance personnel and members of non-governmental organizations. From it they can learn how to make a filter for drinking water or a stove that makes more efficient use of fuel, how to combat soil erosion, and how to carry out a reforestation project (which species of tree to select, etc). There is also a bibliography and a list of useful addresses. ■

PROTECTING THE DJA FOREST

The luxuriant Dja Forest, in southern Cameroon, figures on Unesco's World Heritage List as a natural site of outstanding beauty and is also a part of Unesco's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme network of Biosphere Reserves. A virtually intact example of a primary tropical forest, Dja is extraordinarily rich in flora and fauna. A single tree 30 to 40 metres high can be home to as many as a thousand different species of insect, and the forest's streams and rivers support some 120 species of fish. Hippopotami, elephants and rare dwarf chimpanzees are to be found in the Dja Forest alongside gorillas, snakes and a bird population so varied that not all its species have yet been identified and logged. The Dja Forest is the site of a pilot project whose objective is to help the peoples who live there — including Pygmies — to exploit the forest's resources in a rational and sustainable manner and to combat poaching, which is now reaching massive proportions. ■

WILD BIRDS GROUNDED

Two airlines, KLM and Garuda, have decided that they will no longer transport wild birds to the United States. This follows bans on this traffic imposed earlier by Lufthansa and three US airlines. In 1989, 87,300 wild birds were loaded by these six airlines for transportation to the United States. On arrival, 2,430 of the birds were found to be dead. ■

TIGERS AND LYNX FLOURISH

Of the 37 species of wild felines, 22 are endangered to varying degrees, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature (formerly the World Wildlife Fund). Agriculture, forest exploitation and urbanization are gradually depriving them of the spacious habitats they need. With this in mind, the Indian Government and the WWF have carried out a vast joint campaign for the protection of tigers as a result of which India's tiger population has more than doubled in fourteen years. Similar results have been achieved with the lynx which, despite protests from sheep-raisers on whose flocks the lynx preys, has been reintroduced in several European countries. ■

US FACES 185-BILLION-DOLLAR BILL FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

The cost of environmental protection programmes in the United States is expected to rise to over $185 billion by the year 2000, according to projections made by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Over the past twenty years the cost of programmes for the protection of air, water and the terrestrial environment has almost quadrupled, rising from $30 billion in 1972 to $115 billion in 1990 (equivalent to 2.1% of Gross National Product). Of the overall cost the Federal Government furnishes 11%, the States 3.5%, the municipal authorities 22.5% and the private sector 63%. ■

THE GREEN HILLS OF BURUNDI

The thousand hills of Burundi, once ravaged and laid bare by deforestation, are green once more. Staff of the French Tropical Forest Technical Centre have successfully carried out a number of conservation actions. They have taken measures to protect the last remaining stretch of primary forest on the Nile/Zaire watershed, which is the habitat of a flourishing chimpanzee population and a unique pool of genetic diversity. The project began with a vast state reforestation programme, the encouragement of smaller, community tree-planting schemes, and the planting by private individuals of small copses and anti-erosion hedges. It was not until soil and forest degradation had reached an alarming level that the local population prepared to do battle against erosion and re-plant trees. A strong sense of environmental awareness was finally aroused and in the last ten years fifty million trees (about one hundred trees per family) have been grown in Burundi. ■

BEIJING BATTLES AGAINST POLLUTION

Since 1980 the city of Beijing has been involved in a vast clean-up operation. At night, an impressive fleet of water tankers invades the streets of the city, crewed by municipal workers who wash the deserted avenues and spray the trees that line them. By day, other teams sweep the streets, calmly indifferent to the tidal wave of cyclists that swirls around them. The clean-up campaign has included drives to reduce the numbers of domestic animals, birds and flies, and the installation of a profusion of litter-bins and spittoons.

Today, with the help of a $125-million loan from the World Bank and the International Development Association, the clean-up campaign has taken on a new dimension. Work now planned includes the construction of a 32-kilometre pipeline to feed an urban heating network in the western sector of the city; the setting up of a company to manage a new sewerage system; and the construction of a 72-hectare waste disposal centre capable of handling 2,000 tons of waste a day. ■

EARTH'S OZONE SHIELD UNDER THREAT

The hole in the ozone layer was discovered in 1985 and became headline news. How serious is the problem and what is being done to solve it?

The ozone layer, the tenuous layer of gas that surrounds our planet between twelve and forty-five kilometres above our heads, is being rapidly depleted. Seasonally occurring holes have appeared in it over the Poles and, more recently, over the temperate regions of the northern hemisphere. The threat is a serious one since the ozone layer acts as a filter that traps almost all in-coming ultraviolet radiation, which is harmful to all living organisms—humans, animals and plants.

Even though the ozone layer is some twenty-five kilometres thick, the atmosphere in it is very tenuous and the total amount of ozone, compared with other atmospheric gases, is quite small. If all of the ozone in a vertical column reaching up through the atmosphere were to be compressed to sea-level pressure, it would form a layer only a few millimetres thick.

Monitoring and forecasting

Ozone (chemical formula 0_3), from the Greek *ozein*, meaning "to smell", consists of oxygen (0_2) which under the effect of solar radiation acquires a free atom of oxygen. Ozone is highly reactive to chlorine, hydrogen and nitrogen. Of these chlorine is the most dangerous since it is very stable and has a very long life. When they reach the stratosphere, chlorine atoms attach themselves to the ozone molecules and destroy them, with consequent repercussions on the quality of life on Earth.

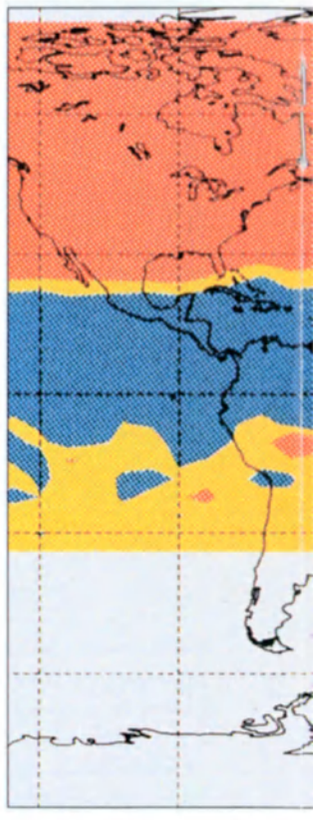
Detailed study of the ozone layer began comparatively recently, in 1930, the earliest observations being made by the English scientist Sydney Chapman. These initial observations were taken up by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) which established the Dobson Network consisting of one hundred observation stations. Since 1983, on the initiative of WMO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), seven of these stations have been entrusted with the task of making long-term forecasts of the likely evolution of our precious shield.

In 1958, the researchers who permanently monitor the ozone content of the layer above the South Pole began to observe certain seasonal variations. From June there was a slight reduction in ozone content which reached a minimum in October. In November there was a sudden increase in the ozone content. These fluctuations appeared to result from the natural phenomena of wind effects and temperature change.

However, although the October minimum remained constant until 1979, the total ozone content over the Pole was steadily diminishing until, in 1985, public opinion was finally roused by reports of a "hole" in the ozone layer and observations were intensified.

The culprits responsible for the hole had already been identified as being supersonic aircraft, such as Concorde, (although these have now been exonerated) and the notorious compounds known as chlorofluorocarbons, or CFCs. Synthesized in 1928 by chemists working at General Motors in the United States, CFCs are compounds of atoms of chlorine and fluorine. Having the advantage of being non-flammable, non-toxic and non-corrosive, they came into widespread use in the 1950s. They are widely used in refrigerators (15%), air-conditioners (20%) and to make the "bubbles" in the foam plastic used, for example, in car seats and as insulation in buildings (24%). They are also used as propellants in aerosol sprays and as a cleansing solvent in the computer industry (24%).

In 1989 they represented a market valued at over $1.5 billion and a labour force of 1.6 million. Of the twenty-five countries producing CFCs, the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Japan and Germany account for three-quarters of the total world production of some 1.2 million tons.



The economic issues

These figures give some idea of the importance of the economic interests that are at stake in any decision to ban the industrial use of CFCs. But, with CFCs incriminated by scientists, the question arose as to whether we were prepared to take the risk of seeing an increase in the number of cases of skin cancer, eye ailments such as cataract, or even a lowering of the human immune defence system, all effects that would follow further depletion of the ozone layer. Not only humans would be affected. So would reproduction and growth of plant-life; phytoplancton, the first link in the ocean food chain and an element vital to the survival of most marine species, would not be able to survive in the first two metres below the surface of the ocean.

UNEP decided that something had to be done, and in March 1985 it organized the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Global Convention for

the Protection of the Ozone Layer, the Vienna Convention as it has come to be called, which was adopted by twenty-two countries. This was followed, in 1987, by the signing by twenty-four industrialized countries of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the first world agreement aimed at halting the production of CFCs. As more evidence emerged concerning the seriousness of the threat, it became apparent that the protocol was not stringent enough and, year by year, its severity was increased until in 1990 in London, seventy countries agreed to stop all production of CFCs by the year 2000. Clearly it would be extremely costly for the richer countries to produce satisfactory substitutes that would meet the requirements of efficiency, safety and non-pollution; for the newly industrializing countries, however, the problem would be even greater.

Two German chemists from the Max Planck Institute, Frank Arnold and Paul Cruzen, maintain that there has always been a hole in the ozone layer over the Antarctic. The French volcanologist Haroun Tazieff lays the blame on the rays of the sun which, being oblique at the Pole, bring an insufficient amount of ultraviolet radiation to reconstitute the missing ozone veil.

Have those who incriminate the CFCs sufficient evidence to support their alarming statements? In November 1991 the United States and sixteen European countries launched a vast project—the European Arctic Stratospheric Ozone Experiment (EASOE). Scientists from almost every European country, as well as from Japan and the United States, participated. Funds for the project were provided by various national research organizations and the European Economic Community.

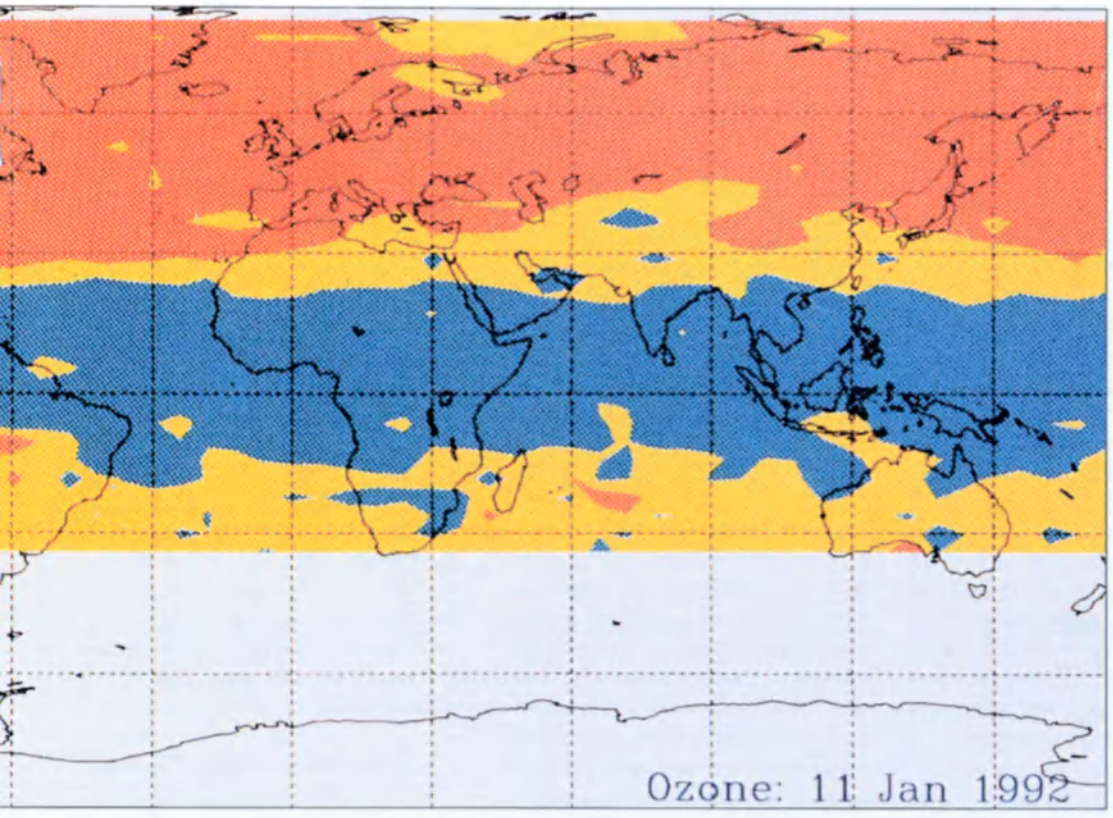
Observations previously made by satellites of the US National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) were completed by a series of land stations, a ship, four aeroplanes, a number of rockets and forty balloons each carrying from 20 to 500 kilograms of equipment. The objective was to measure not only the ozone but also to detect the presence of CFCs, methane, nitrogen dioxide and other substances. The project ended in March 1992.

A new culprit

In December 1991, scientists working on the project noted a depletion of the ozone layer over the Arctic. In February NASA announced that the ozone layer was being depleted faster than had generally been anticipated and that it was also depleting over the northern hemisphere. The finger was pointed at another culprit, the Pinatubo volcano in the Philippines, which erupted in June 1991 releasing twelve million tons of volcanic gases into the atmosphere.

Even if the entire world were to agree today to halt all production and use of CFCs, this would not provide an immediate solution to the problem. A single molecule of chlorine can destroy from 10,000 to 100,000 molecules of ozone. Furthermore, CFCs have a lifespan of between 75 and 400 years and they take ten years to reach the ozone layer. In other words, what we are experiencing now results from CFCs emitted ten years ago.

Industrialists are now urgently searching for substitute products. Some, such as propane, are too dangerous because they are inflammable; others, the HCFCs, might prove to be toxic and to contribute to the greenhouse effect, i.e. to the process of global warming. Nevertheless, even if there is no denying that the atmosphere is at present in a state of disturbance, nobody can say that the situation will not right itself, whether in the short or in the long term, especially if we ourselves lend a hand. ■



Map of the northern hemisphere showing the distribution of stratospheric ozone on 11 January 1992. Concentrations are colour-coded from blue (lowest) to red (highest). The map shows a large loss of ozone over the tropics, coinciding roughly with the plume from the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pinatubo (Philippines) in June 1991.

FRANCE BEQUETTE, a Franco-American journalist specializing in environmental questions, has been involved since 1985 in the WANAD-UNESCO training programme for African news-agency journalists. She has played a leading part in the preparation of this "Greenwatch" section. ■

FRANCESCO DI CASTRI

An environmentalist of international reputation, Francesco di Castri launched UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme and is currently co-ordinator of all UNESCO's environment programmes. Published here is the first part of a long interview.

Several theories have been advanced to explain the formation of the Earth and the appearance of life upon it. Which of these theories do you support?

– As far as environmental considerations are concerned, interest focuses much more on questions about the origins of life on our planet. When did it first appear? What processes were and are involved in biological evolution? To what extent are we altering or destroying this tendency for species to evolve? For me these are the key questions.

Life on Earth began about four thousand million years ago (give or take a few hundred million years), producing a rich heritage of marine and terrestrial species. Yet we are affecting the environment to such a degree that we are quite capable of destroying in a few hours the fruit of several million years of evolution.

Such destruction is irreversible. We can rebuild a city and even, sometimes, an ancient monument, but it is absolutely impossible for us to replace an extinct species. However, we should not succumb to sentimental dreaming; the disappearance of a species is a perfectly normal phenomenon in the evolutionary history of the biosphere. Long before the spectacular extinction of the dinosaurs, other species had disappeared. Tomorrow, yet others will disappear.

Environmental education for women in Burkina Faso.

What is abnormal is not the extinction of species but the rate at which they are disappearing. According to some experts, we may be destroying as many as 50,000 species a year. Under normal circumstances it would have taken several thousand years for these species to become extinct. Apart from the abnormally high rate of extinctions, the problem lies in the fact that certain species that have a key role to play are disappearing, not for biological reasons, but because of human activities.

The objective is not, for some abstract reason, to attempt to preserve all species, but to keep those that have a vital role to play, in particular those that are essential components in all biological areas—such as those species that contribute to the functioning of ecological systems and to the composition of the atmosphere.

Which species do you class as being of vital importance?

– To be able to answer your question with any precision, we would need to know one of the great unknowns—the number of species the biosphere holds. Estimates range from around four million to thirty or forty million (the most likely figure) and on up to as many as one hundred million. At present we know of the existence of only a tiny proportion of species. As a result, many species appear and disappear without our even knowing of their existence.

Today, the words ecology and ecosystem are on everybody's lips. What exactly do they mean?

– Ecology is the study of the interactions of living organisms. This includes the interaction of man with the physical environment as well as the interactions between the different physical environments themselves. It is not only the study of the effects the environment has on living organisms, but also of the interactions of all the species. The human species is one among many others, but with this difference that

it has become capable of having a determining influence on the evolution of other species. Not only does it influence their numbers and alter the conditions of their habitats, it can also, through biotechnology, create new species. This double power, biological and ecological, that one species can exercise on the evolution of the entire biosphere is a factor unprecedented in the history of the Earth.

The concept of an ecosystem is a rather artificial and changing one. The fact is that the definition of an ecosystem varies according to the approach adopted by the researcher who uses the term. For some people, their gardens, or a culture of microbes on a laboratory dish, are ecosystems; for others (more correctly) a tropical forest is an ecosystem. Others view the entire globe as a single ecosystem. The one feature common to all ecosystems, however defined, is an internal flow of energy, of genetic information and, sometimes, of cultural influences which pass from one of its components to the others. Thus ecosystems are complex systems that exist at different levels of organization, from small population groups to the entire biosphere, including the atmosphere.

What were the great landmarks in the awakening of awareness about ecological problems?

– The basic concept of ecology had already emerged in the nineteenth century, but it was looked upon primarily as an economic tool for increasing the productivity of ecosystems. "Agricultural ecology", for example, aimed at increasing crop yield by improvement of the species cultivated. Thus the meaning given to the word *ecology* was almost the opposite of that which it has acquired today.

Silent Spring, a book by the American author and biologist Rachel Carson, was astonishingly successful in arousing international awareness of the dangers of environmental pollution. Among other things, it revealed the drastic diminution in the number of bird species caused by the use of pesticides. This awareness was accelerated by increasing pollution of urban air, which became almost unbreathable in some cities, such as Mexico City.

When did this "ecological awakening" occur?

– Rachel Carson's book was published in 1962, but widespread awareness can be dated from the 1970s. This decade marked a turning-point, with the birth of the first ecological movements and with governments themselves beginning to react, as witness the convening by the United Nations of the first major conference on the environment, at Stockholm in 1972. This trend has been accentuated by the discovery of holes in the ozone layer and of the greenhouse effect. It became apparent that humankind was not only destroying species but also the atmosphere that controls the climate.

This enhanced awareness was not restricted to the industrialized countries, but extended also to the developing countries. The latter became aware that their own natural resources—their forests and regions bordering deserts—were being destroyed, not only by their own demographic expansion but also by anarchic forms of development imposed from outside. The necessity to sell commercial products to the industrialized countries in order to acquire foreign currency has had serious effects on their environment.

These two aspects of ecological awareness—that triggered in the industrialized countries by pollution and the imminent possibility of climate change and that aroused in the Third World by the disappearance of forests and the lowering of levels of public health—are today, I believe, merging to form a new "planetary ecological awareness". It is now accepted that what happens in the North also affects what happens in the South, and vice versa. *To be continued* ■

Interview by Serafín García, journalist with UNESCO's Office of Public Information

Francesco di Castri is involved in a wide range of international activities related to the environment. President of the Scientific Committee on Problems of the Environment of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU), President of the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), and a research director at the French National Centre of Scientific Research (CNRS), he has written some 300 scientific articles and is the author or co-author of a dozen or so books, the most recent of which, *Landscape Boundaries. Consequences for Biotic Diversity and Ecological Flows*, was published earlier this year. On 25 March 1992, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) awarded him its Global 500 prize for actions and initiatives to promote the conservation of the environment and sustainable development. ■

***School of Rusty Fish*, (1988). Sculpture in resin and oxidized metal by Sandra and Christian Gamby. 8m x 1.5m.**

Voices from the past

THE GREAT FLOOD

The myth of the Great Flood is almost universal. Its many versions relate how the world was engulfed and humankind virtually annihilated by the deluge, which left only a few survivors belonging to the human race and different animal and plant species. Human sinfulness is one of the main causes of the Flood, but so too is the decrepitude of the world, for this is an ambivalent myth in which destruction paves the way for regeneration.

On this page is the story of the Great Flood as it is related in the oldest extant epic in world history, the Gilgamesh epic that was composed over 3,500 years ago in Mesopotamia.

Stunned shock over Adad's deeds overtook the heavens,
and turned to blackness all that had been light....
All day long the South Wind blew...,
blowing fast, submerging the mountain in water,
overwhelming the people like an attack.
No one could see his fellow
they could not recognize each other in the torrent.
The gods were frightened by the Flood,
and retreated, ascending to the heaven of Anu.
The gods were cowering like dogs, crouching by the outer wall.
Ishtar shrieked like a woman in childbirth,

Babylonian cylinder seal depicting an offering to a divinity. Syria, 18th century BC.

the sweet-voiced Mistress of the Gods wailed:
"The olden days have turned to clay,
because I said evil things in the Assembly of the Gods!
How could I say evil things in the Assembly of the Gods,
ordering a catastrophe to destroy my people?!
No sooner have I given birth to my dear people
than they fill the sea like so many fish!"
The gods—those of the Anunnaki—were weeping with her,
the gods humbly sat weeping, sobbing with grief,
their lips burning, parched with thirst.
Six days and seven nights
came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived, the storm was pounding,
the flood was a war....
The sea calmed, fell still, the whirlwind (and) flood stopped up.
I looked around all day long—quiet had set in
and all the human beings had turned to clay!
The terrain was as flat as a roof.
I opened a vent and fresh air (daylight?) fell upon the side of my nose.
I fell to my knees and sat weeping,
tears streaming down the side of my nose.
I looked around for coastlines in the expanse of the sea,
and at twelve leagues there emerged a region (of land).
On Mt. Nimush the boat lodged firm,
Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
One day and a second Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A third day, a fourth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A fifth day, a sixth, Mt. Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
When a seventh day arrived
I sent forth a dove and released it.
The dove went off, but came back to me.
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
I sent forth a swallow and released it.
The swallow went off, but came back to me;
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
I sent forth a raven and released it.
The raven went off, and saw the waters slither back.
It eats, it scratches, it bobs, but does not circle back to me.
Then I sent out everything in all directions and sacrificed (a sheep).
I offered incense in front of the mountain-ziggurat.
Seven and seven cult vessels I put in place,
and (into the fire) underneath (or: into their bowls) I poured reeds,
cedar and myrtle.
The gods smelled the savour,
the gods smelled the sweet savour,
and collected like flies over a (sheep) sacrifice.
Just then Beletili arrived.
She lifted up the large flies (beads) which Anu had made for his enjoyment (?):
"You gods, as surely as I shall not forget this lapis lazuli around my neck
may I be mindful of these days, and never forget them!
The gods may come to the incense offering,
but Enlil may not come to the incense offering,
because without considering he brought about the Flood
and consigned my people to annihilation."

The Epic of Gilgamesh, translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs, Stanford University Press © 1985, 1989.

Companions of the Sun

An extract from the Gilgamesh epic features in an anthology of texts on the relationship between humankind and the natural world which is to be published (in French) by UNESCO, Editions de la Découverte (Paris) and the Fondation pour le progrès de l'Homme. Entitled *Compagnons du soleil* ("Companions of the Sun"), the 500-page anthology has been prepared under the general editorship of the noted African historian Joseph Ki-Zerbo, of Burkina Faso, in collaboration with Marie-Josèphe Beaud. The idea for the anthology came from the Vézelay Group, an international panel consisting of eight members, including Joseph Ki-Zerbo.

Joseph Ki-Zerbo describes the anthology as a collection of "the fundamental or significant texts which, in the world's different cultures, testify to the relations between man and nature". He adds that "the battle for the health of nature will not only be won by recourse to political or legal procedures, technical or fiscal remedies, or international agreements, however solemn, but by an awakening of society generated by inner motivations, which are sustained by the powerful sources of symbolism, ethics and aesthetics. With respect to nature, man must choose between symbiosis and suicide." ■

Black Africa's open societies

BY IBA DER THIAM

TOLERANCE has always held a pre-eminent position in the thought of many African peoples. In West Africa, for example, it is the fundamental principle on which the entire social life of the Senegambian region is built, governing the interaction between individuals and ethnic groups as well as international relations.

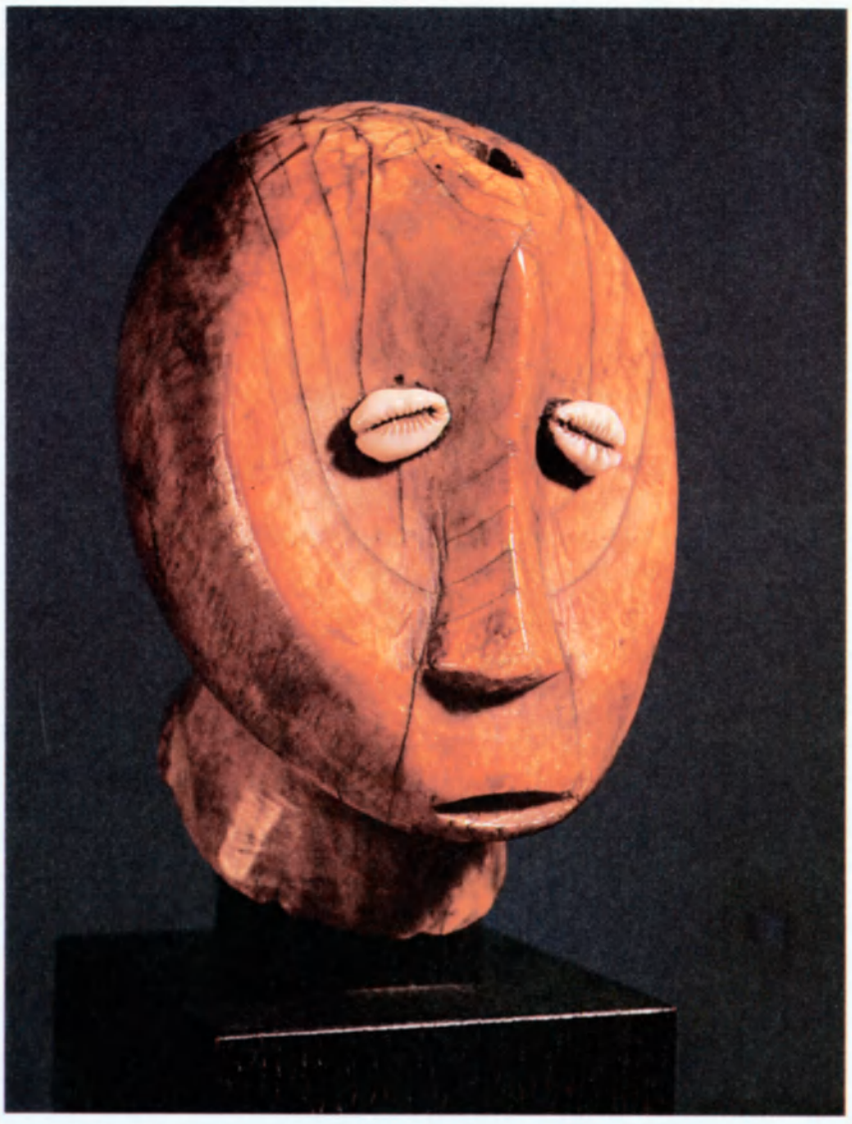
Nothing illustrates this better than the central place the concept of peace occupies in the region's moral thinking. The Wolof saying, "*Ci Jaam la yeep xeej*", which signifies that peace bears innumerable promises, implies that peace is the necessary precondition for social stability, political equilibrium, economic prosperity and moral and material progress.

Even before the experience of the slave trade and colonial oppression, the aspiration for peace was a deeply-felt need in a society exposed for centuries of its long history to the vicissitudes of wars fought in the name of conquest or in defence of local aristocracies. It has left its mark on the most anodyne details of daily life. When two people meet, one says as a greeting, "Are you at peace?" "Nothing but peace," the other replies, as if the harmony born of universal accord, whatever the philosophical, religious or moral starting-points or choices of the people involved, could bring an inner calm and sense of hope more valuable than anything else life has to offer.

The same leitmotif of an aspiration for peace and security reappears in the prayer offered by each family to call down God's blessings on its members and on all things. In the words of one traditional Guinean supplication, "Let peace reign in the world! May the pot and the calabash not fall out! Let the beasts live in harmony! May every bad word and unbecoming thought be rooted out and packed off to the back of beyond, to the depths of the virgin forest!"

As the principal element regulating relations between people and between communities, tolerance is the imperative that governs all social life. In some African societies it means refusing to mistrust other people and rejecting both fear and preconceptions in dealing with whatever is new, unknown, unusual or out of the normal pattern.

Painting on a wall in Dakar depicting a village meeting.



This ivory mask with cowrie-shell eyes is a product of the expressive artistic tradition of the Lega (or Balega) people of the Congo.

THE HUMAN DIMENSION

Professor Cheikh Anta Diop suggested that in the Cayor region of Senegal the election of the king was a traditional perquisite of what he called the "governing council". All the social groups that made up the nation were represented in this institution. The aim was not merely to make the body representative but also to encourage collegial participation and friendly social relations in an atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect.

Although the *diawerigne m'boul,* the officer presiding over the council, was always chosen from among the *geer* or aristocracy, the *lamane diamatil,* the *bataloupe ndiob* and the *badie gateigne,* all of whom were governors of important provinces as well as council members, had to come from the *gmegno,* the ranks of the people of caste, while the *diawerigne boule* represented the house-slaves.

For traditional societies of this sort, humankind may be one in essence but it is nonetheless diverse in its ways of living and thinking and in the manner in which its constituent groups come to terms with themselves and other peoples. Consequently they made the *nitt* or human being their principal frame of reference. This human essence was seen as a generic concept, independent of time and place, the supreme embodiment of the divine presence on Earth. Stripped of all moral, philosophical or political connotations, it became a sublimated ideal to which everyone owed consideration and deference.

It is in this light that the treatment of strangers in some African societies must be considered. Newcomers are welcomed with kindliness and generosity, no matter what language they speak or what their sex, age, religion or social or political condition may be, for they are human beings first and foremost. As such, they have a right to food and shelter. Their person, goods and health will be protected, and they will be given a decent burial if they die.

In some Wolof communities, it is quite common for the head of a family to give up his own house and bed, or that of his wives or children, to strangers, without giving a thought to his own state of health. Among the Bassari, custom dictates that the tribal chief may even graciously put a female companion at the newcomer's disposal, in the hope that the possible seed sown by their relationship may revivify and strengthen the community.

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THE SECRET OF WISDOM

The Master said: "My doctrine amounts to one single thing that encompasses everything". Tseng tseu replied: "Indeed". When the Master had withdrawn, his disciples asked what he had meant. Tseng tseu replied: "All our Master's wisdom lies in perfecting oneself and in loving others like oneself".

ANALECTS, CONFUCIUS (551?-479? BC), CHINA

Following this logic, the differences between peoples, far from being stressed as barriers separating humankind, are minimized to such an extent that they finally lose much or all of their meaning and their divisiveness, and are blurred and blunted until they become harmless. Integration of this sort involves not a denial of the foreigner's identity—and here I have in mind those insidious processes of assimilation that are really more like mutilation—but a profound and freely accepted awareness of the symbiotic complementarity linking the individual to other people. Unbreakable bonds are forged in this fusing of essences.

RENEWING THE TRADITION

This was the state of mind in which Africa, from the dawn of history, opened itself to the outside world. From the time of Queen Hatshepsut's expedition from her native Egypt to the land of Punt in the years between 1493 and 1490 BC until the nineteenth-century explorers, there is no lack of witnesses to the African spirit of tolerance and unfailing hospitality.

It was as a result of the prevailing peace that Habib ben Unaïda and al-Fazari, around 800 AD, were able to compile their chronicles, the first to mention the existence of the empire of Ghana; that Ibn Hawqal was free to visit the lands south of the Sahara; that al-Bakri, al-Idrisi, Yakut Ibn Saïd and al-Umari, between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries, could give us precious descriptions of the kingdoms of the so-called Sudanic belt from Senegal to the Nile; that Ibn Battuta could visit Mali and Leo the African Timbuktu. Free of dogmatism and sectarianism, the spirit of tolerance encouraged dialogue and the exchange of ideas.

The same phenomenon was at work on the West African coast. Gomes Eanes Zurara's chronicles of Guinea, and the travel writings of Diogo Gomes, Duarte Pacheco Pereira, Joâo de Barros and of the Venetian Ca'da Mosto all bear witness to the open-mindedness of the peoples of Cayor, Baol and Sine Saloum, whose humanity would also be attested to by other Western visitors from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries. Tolerance extended to colour, language, religion and ethnic and social origin as well as to sex and philosophical or moral views. This atmosphere enabled Christian missionaries to carry out their work without risk wherever traders had set up bases and colonizers had raised their flags.

Despite long-held views to the contrary, these were in effect open societies where freedom and justice reigned. Dare one say that democracy and tolerance flourished there until the slave trade and colonial conquest and all that went with it—native status, taxes, military conscription, land seizure, forced labour—created an endemic state of violence that corrupted social habits and ways of life to the point at which they were no longer recognizable.

So a precious heritage lies buried beneath the still-smouldering ruins of colonial imperialism. Contemporary Africa must rediscover it quickly, to create worlds of freedom, peace and social harmony in which all its children can find fulfilment. ❐

***La fermière en buste* (1908), oil on canvas by Picasso.**

Islam: a conflict of models

BY MOHAMMED ARKOUN

IN what sense can we speak of tolerance in an Islamic context? The tolerance sought after nowadays stems from the very situation that down the centuries gave rise to the intolerance of the traditional religious systems, underpinned as they were by the apparatus of state power—emperors, caliphs and sultans, drawing their justification from religious institutions.

In this respect Christianity and Islam are very similar: their expansion as religions went hand in hand with the establishment of empires and kingdoms committed to a strict definition of God's truth as the basis of human laws. God intervenes in men's affairs in different ways depending on their religion: but power structures invariably derive their justification from transcendent sacred teachings whose orthodox versions are purveyed and sustained by what Max Weber called "managers of the sacred".

Starting in the eighteenth century in Europe, competition developed between two historical models for the production and reproduction of societies: one gave rise to "Societies of the Book"; the other to secular societies devoid of any theistic content and relying for their legitimacy on universal suffrage and democratic debate.

So the distinction is not, as commonly stated, between religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism, but between functional religion-state solidarity and the collapse of this solidarity in the model that stemmed from the French Revolution and the Enlightenment.

Now what becomes of the question of tolerance if we look at it in the context of this analysis?

Historically, first, the crucial break in the eighteenth century constituted a watershed. Before it, tolerance (in the sense of freedom of religion and legal protection for basic human and civic rights) was psychologically and intellectually *inconceivable* in relation to

mutually exclusive theological systems constructed by religious communities for their own protection—or perhaps their expansion.

A PROTECTED AREA

A dogmatic theology claims for its community a monopoly of revealed truth, and hence of the power that defends it. Islamic law was less exclusivist than other systems: under it, Christians and Jews enjoyed the famous *dhimmi* (protected person) status. But this was tolerance born of indifference, together with humiliating measures designed to emphasize the superiority of Islamic truth. Judaeo-Islamic and Christian-Islamic polemic commonly uses the example of this *dhimmi* status to stigmatize Islam's fundamental, ever-active intolerance.

It is, however, anachronistic as well as unfair to judge one of the Societies of the Book in this way whilst sparing the others any criticism, and to use the postulates of the Enlightenment model to disqualify Islam alone. On the Muslim side, one way of answering such accusations of intolerance against Islam formulated on the basis of Enlightenment logic would be to use verses from the Qur'an chosen to bring out the idea of tolerance. This would be equally anachronistic and manipulative, and I reject it: I know very well that the traditional interpretation of the verses most favourable to tolerance has given way to the theological postulates of God's truth placed under the vigilant protection of theologian-jurists who confer on their decisions a specially exalted ontological, cognitive, legal and spiritual status.

Certainly the great texts of Islamic thought helped, with others, to pave the way to tolerance in its modern sense. I am thinking of the writings of the mystics, the intellectual breakthroughs, the political protests, of writers like Hasan al-Basri (d. 772), al-Jahiz (d. 869), al-Kindi (d. 870), al-Tawhidi (d. 1014) and al-Ma'arri (d. 1058). But all these anticipations, intuitions and musings form part of what anthologies since the days of ancient Iran have called "the eternal wisdom" (*Javidan Khirad* or *al-hikma al-khalida*).

Above, the constellation of Aquarius. An illustration from the *Liber de stellis fixarum (The Book of Fixed Stars)*, a 13th-century Latin translation of an Arabic treatise. Opposite page, detail of a 15th-century Arabic commentary on the *Elements of Geometry* by Euclid, the mathematician of Greek Antiquity.

THE SYMBOLIC CAPITAL

What happened *after* the break?

Islam as a religion, Islamic thought and Muslim society remained aloof from events. While European societies underwent accelerated change, planned and directed by a capitalist mercantile bourgeoisie, the world of Islam was subjected to the reverse process: it grew feebler, its intellectual horizons and cultural activity contracted, and the tribal system expanded as the central authority was

weakened. These developments helped the establishment of the colonial empires, which worsened the situation economically, politically and culturally and led to the wars of liberation following the Second World War.

This historical résumé, which deserves to be amplified with detail, at least shows that tolerance cannot be on the agenda in societies which since the thirteenth century have undergone a process whereby cultural and ethnic groups became independent, urban élites and popular masses became differentiated, and religion, language and culture became homogenized in towns, villages and regions. The Ottoman régime, and in many respects the colonialists, fostered this break-up of societies into particularist groups; religion split into sects and fraternities, power became hereditary, the economy tended towards self-sufficiency, languages became diversified into dialects, and culture became confined to what the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has called "the symbolic capital".[1]

These societies, fragmented into groups isolated from each other, jealous of their "identities" and often in revolt against the government (especially if it was distant), remained cut off from modernity until the 1950s. The colonial régimes certainly encouraged the formation of socio-cultural enclaves, in which the need to modernize institutions, and ideas about society and intellectual life, began to be felt. But it was not until the era of political independence that nation-states everywhere compelled separatist groups and local independence movements to play a part in "national reconstruction". This novel socio-political driving force was very soon to make tolerance as topical and as urgent as it was in the Christian societies of eighteenth-century Europe.

***Tradition and Modernity*, a work by the Bahraini painter Ahmed Baqer which draws inspiration from Arab life and festivities.**

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MANY AND ONE

O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other.

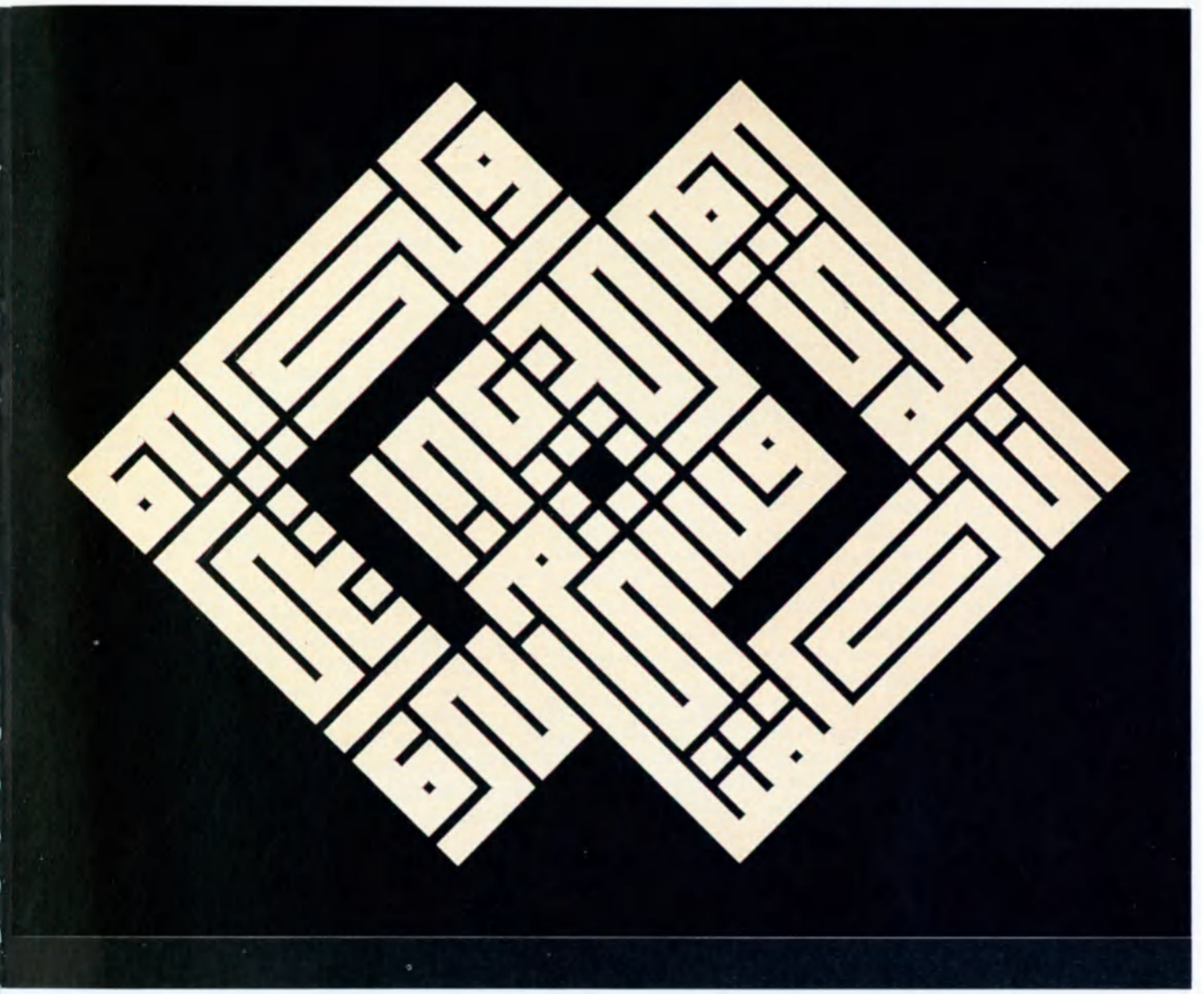
THE QUR'AN, SURAH XLIX, THE APARTMENTS (V.13)

Thus we see that tolerance is not a cardinal virtue dictated by the great religious and philosophical teachings, but represents rather a response to social and political demand at times of great ideological turmoil—a questioning of the "values" peculiar to the various social groups that make up a nation.

The practice of tolerance everywhere calls for an effort of individual will, plus political will on the part of the state. We can say that these two wills have so far by and large been lacking in many Muslim countries, but this is attributable to historical, sociological and anthropological factors rather than to the silence of religious texts or the inadequacy of Islamic thought.

The Encyclopaedists' audience consisted of concerned citizens, ready to translate the ideas of the Enlightenment into political and economic terms. A similar audience existed for brief periods in the history of Islamic society: in the ninth and tenth centuries a mercantile middle class in the big towns provided scope for the development of an Arabic-speaking humanism open to the teachings of the "eternal wisdom", in which Islam was but one of several components.[2]

A similar situation prevailed in several societies between 1850 and 1940: this was the so-called Renaissance (*nahdha*) period, especially in the Arab world. An intelligentsia open to the teachings of the Enlightenment sought to promote liberal democracy, especially after the abolition of the Ottoman sultanate; but the narrow social base of this



movement, coupled with the political vigilance of the colonial powers, prevented any real development of modernity. Since the 1960s, population growth and the spread of populist ideologies, together with large-scale uprooting of settled populations and harsh supervision in one-party states, have tipped Muslim societies towards violent confrontations, growing protest movements and a sense of collective frustration—all of which tend to foster the development of intransigent doctrines.

In this brief analysis I aim to suggest—and this will be my conclusion—that in contemporary societies the tolerance-intolerance question takes on dimensions and meanings which make it impossible to restrict oneself to the isolated case of this or that society, mode of thought or religion. What is so inappropriately called "Islam" cannot be removed from the context of the world forces that govern the destiny of all peoples. When journalists, political scientists and sociologists use terms like fanaticism, xenophobia, violence and intolerance in relation to present-day Islamic movements, these terms need to be understood in the light of the internal and external causes that give rise to these manifestations.

"O mankind! We created you from a single pair of a male and a female. . . ." (The *Qur'an, Surah* XLIX, The Apartments, v 13). Calligraphy by Namane Zakri.

This is not to minimize the climate of intolerance that has grown up in some Muslim societies in connection with what is called the "awakening of Islam". If I stress the magnitude of the political and economic pressures still being exerted on these societies, and argue that the changing importance of religions needs to be appraised in the light of the historical conditions and social settings in which they carry out their vocations, it is in order to reinforce a tolerant approach to the phenomenon of religion in general, and hence to suggest a more understanding attitude towards the expressions of contemporary Islam. ❐

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1. Pierre Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique,* Editions de Minuit, Paris, 1980.
2. Mohammed Arkoun, *L'humanisme arabe au IVe/Xe siècle.* Vrin publishers, Paris, 1982.

Against intolerance

BY EDGARD PISANI

THE world vacillates between indifference and intolerance. Fellow feeling seems to be a thing of the past.

Indifference is a serious matter. In the big cities, in Western societies, wherever small human communities are withering away or have already disappeared, the individual is isolated, and nobody communicates any more.

We no longer see or listen to each other. Do other people exist for us or we for them? Our encounters with them are random, self-centred affairs and when we do speak we sense only the painful vibrations of a voice without echo.

Little is said about this malady, although it is magnified by the media, with their tendency to turn everything into a happening. Yet it is a destructive sickness that leaves us alone in the crowd, alone in our homes, alone in the world, alone in a void that our lost sense of the sacred is no longer there to fill.

Intolerance is just as serious. It is not simply the lack of a sense of solidarity with other people: it is the rejection of others for what they are, for what they do, for what they think and, eventually, simply because they exist.

We are not talking here of the intolerance of youth, that potent cocktail of intransigence and revolt to which the French novelist Roger Martin du Gard was referring when he wrote: "I quite like the intolerance of youth. It is a good thing for an adolescent to be systematically in revolt against everything." We are speaking rather of an urge that can soon degenerate from irritation to murder.

Intolerance is probably no more widespread today than it was in earlier times. It has always existed throughout history. It may be akin to that instinct for possession and security that impels an animal to defend its territory against intrusion. Going beyond the spirit of conquest and the desire to acquire possessions, it leads to domination and extermination. Intolerance is a refusal to admit the existence of those who do not share the same beliefs as oneself.

Once the others have been exterminated, the intolerant man turns on his own brother, accusing him of being lukewarm, divisive or deviationist. From the Inquisition to the Stalinist régime, the passion to convince gave way to an urge to dominate, to twist the written word and use it as a weapon.

Intolerance is an unquenchable desire for absolute power, whether to preserve the identity of the clan, the purity of the race, territorial dominion, the triumph of a political doctrine or the glory of the Almighty.

At a certain stage in their evolution, both religion and politics carry within them the risk of intolerance. Social and economic life too, although in different forms, as well as ethnic and cultural matters. Even freedom may cease to be a quest and become a doctrine instead.

Intolerance is the rejection of difference, the blood-drenched search for uniformity, the exclusion of any form of autonomy or diversity. It repudiates exchange because exchange

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defuses hatred; it excludes cohabitation because cohabitation means accepting differences.

It is the death of Thought, pronounced in the name of an idea. It spurns doubt, which enriches our lives by inciting enquiry. It turns its back on discovery, because discovery upsets established certainties. It abhors invention because invention rejects the old patterns. It rejects democracy because democracy implies freedom, debate and alternation in office. It is the negation of diversity, however discreet.

Intolerance and the struggle against intolerance will last as long as there are human beings on Earth. But is it possible to fight intolerance without becoming intolerant oneself? Is there not a danger that what happened, for example, in France, in the clash between the clergy and the secularists, will happen elsewhere and in other circumstances? At the outset the secularists spoke out against the domination of society by the Church, but this soon developed into a struggle against the Church simply because the values it stood for were different.

Racism is but one form of intolerance. The human species consists of men and women who are different, but who are all evidently human. Yet there many who deny the diversity that exists in nature and claim that there is a superior race—their own, of course.

How can we learn to accept the infinite diversity of human beings within the evident unity of the human species? How can we learn that, like order and disorder, unity and diversity are but two facets of the same truth?

It is because of the inherent unity of the human species that I accept and love its diversity. It is because of the diversity of cultures, heritage, climate, ethnic groupings, beliefs, customs, visions, that I seek the unity without which diversity would be meaningless. Although each taken singly is a relative concept, unity and diversity together form an absolute good.

Tolerance is the cultivation of diversity within an awareness of and a quest for unity. ❐

THE ALTERNATIVE

I consider it my duty to make sure I understand others. If they act in accordance with the will of God, it would be reprehensible of me to interfere in their actions; if they do not, they are victims of their own ignorance and deserve pity.

AKBAR THE GREAT (1542-1605), MUGHUL EMPEROR OF INDIA

The Omnibus **(1929), oil on canvas, by the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo (1907-1954). Original and deeply rooted in Mexican culture, her work had a significant influence on the Surrealist movement.**

The balancing act

A group of musicians in the Vondelpark (Amsterdam).

LIFE can often be as sordid as a floor cloth, dingy and ragged from constant contact with the mundane. But it does offer wonderful moments. Like yesterday.

Taking one step forwards then two steps back, incipient summer was behaving with the coy timidity of a bashful bride, ready to burst into tears at any moment. In a fit of exasperation I decided to risk it and, grabbing Tonto, my faithful bike, I headed for the Vondelpark.

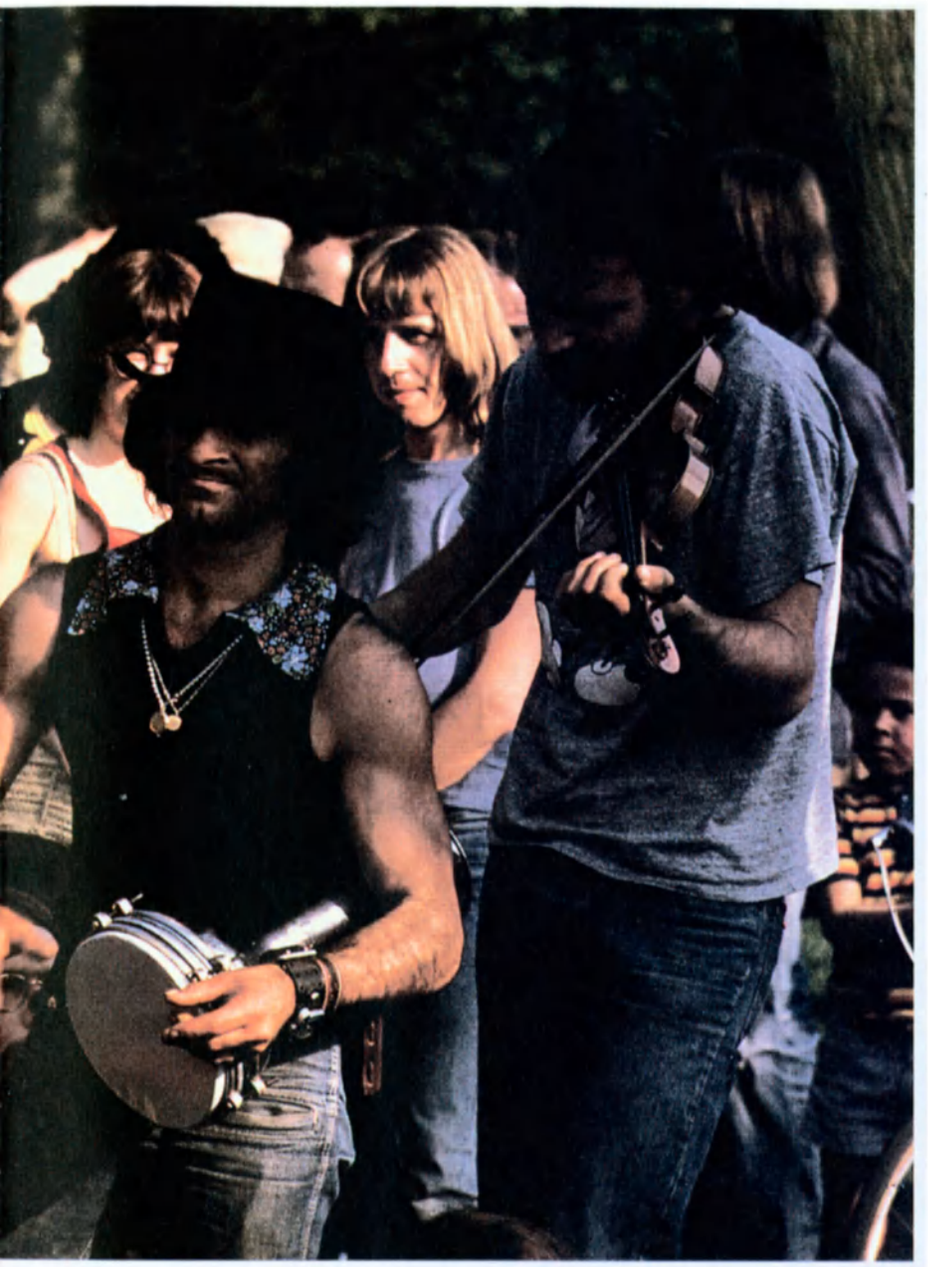
The sky was an indeterminate blue, with a touch of violet that threatened a storm. In the park, a sparse scattering of young people lay on the grass, stripped to the waist, exposing themselves to the risk of colds or worse in the fitful sunshine. After all, when you've tortured your flesh with thousands of stretch-and-flex contortions all winter, you can't let the weather stop you baking and tanning the final product.

But even narcissism was at a low ebb yesterday, confined mainly to willows batting feathery eyelashes at their reflections in the canals and little lakes. Beside them, the ubiquitous cyclists doodled along. The faces of Amsterdammers, usually topped by tousled mops of curly hair, are quite distinctive. There is a rugged, weather-beaten quality to them that contrasts sharply with the jovial blue eyes. As they grow older, Amsterdammers seem to stiffen into openness, into determined good humour as they cycle to their graves with a Greenpeace badge on one lapel and an Amnesty sticker on the other.

The floor of the park was the sharp drenched green of the polders, a colour that, like long afternoons in the swimming-pool, leaves you acutely conscious that the human body is 92 per cent water. In the sunshine, the reflection of heavy foliage and big trees gave the surface of the canals the magical green shimmer of ducks' backs.

As I cycled along, the strains of a violin reached my ears, a curious, jazzy melody accompanied by a drum. I rounded the bend approaching the Film Museum to find a knot of stationary cyclists gathered round a small amateur band. The quiet unassuming notes of a perfect evening *raga* made a dappled melody that blended with the light and shadow of the park. Like the others, I stayed awhile, perched lopsidedly on Tonto, one foot on the path, the other on the pedal, caught in the spell of the music.

In the background rose the imposing bulk of the Film Museum, its sunny terrace dotted with genteel coffee-drinkers whiling away the time at little tables. There was a vaguely gallic air about the made-up faces and fashionable summer outfits. But the Dutch can never quite carry it off. The



in the Vondelpark

BY NIALA MAHARAJ

young look too squeaky clean, their clothes too practical and their innocent complexions reflect their milk-based diets.

Round the next bend a surprise awaited me. The grass was littered with bicycles, their owners reclining beside them. I had brought a biography of Van Gogh to read and was heading for a sunny corner near the lake, when the slow repetitive strains of an Arab melody caught my ear. Beyond a vigorous football game, at the foot of a monument ringed with flowers, a group of Moroccan youths in Western clothing were playing ukelele-like instruments and small drums, and singing. The distant, archaic lilt evoked haunting memories of the *ramayan* groups of Trinidad. Then the tempo speeded up as flourishes, trills and a quickened drum-beat broke the monotony of the song.

There is a sudden flurry of activity to my right. In a spectacular whirligig of acrobatics, two Turkish youths flicker across the grass, their arms and legs interlooping in perfect syncopation as their bodies describe graceful arabesques high in the air to a smattering of hand-claps from the lounging spectators. Then four more youths join in, their shoulder-length curly hair whipping up and down as they spring into human pyramids vibrant with energy. They pause for applause, get it, and flicker down to the grass once more as though gravity does not exist.

Another good-humoured gathering attracts my attention. At the edge of the path, a skinny, blond youth in a garish, orange-patterned shirt is giving haircuts. A hand-made cardboard sign announces the price—ten guilders. He is at work on a long-haired Latin American when the proceedings are interrupted by his customer's daughter with an imperious demand for a paternal kiss.

Memory stirs again . . . Sunday morning . . . Barbers plying their trade under mango-trees in Trinidad. I cannot resist. I choose a vacant spot, lower my bike to the ground and join in the free entertainment.

The sharp thwack of ball on racquet punctuates the droning Moroccan music. To one side of the football game, two muscular young women in striped T-shirts hammer out a ferocious game of paddle tennis. I have never seen the game played with such speed and aggression. Nearer the lake, a couple of blond teenagers are clumsily engaged in a desultory game of badminton.

The South American's haircut is finished. The plastic cape is withdrawn from his shoulders and a brush is flicked over his neck. A Surinamese with a bushy Afro hairstyle is beckoned forward and the blond, lanky barber begins to sculpture a neat shape out of the mass of hair. Near me, a couple of

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***Starry night* (1890), oil on canvas, by Vincent van Gogh.**

Europeans embrace passionately on the grass, devouring each other with kisses. Then, slowly, they ease off and take to stroking each other's face hypnotically.

I force my eyes back to my book, a cheap biography of Van Gogh, one of the country's most glorious figures, but a distant flame suddenly catches from the famous sunflowers on the open page. I look up. The Moroccans have built a fire to warm up their drums, just as our *tassa* musicians in Trinidad do. The music continues with increased vitality, and a skinny girl of Asian appearance, her dress hitched high, begins a sensuous barefoot dance beside the path. The spectators smile encouragingly at her. Her somewhat ravaged face is veiled by long hair, so I return to Van Gogh. His brother has just managed to bribe him away from the clutches of a poor prostitute, providing him with the money to enable him to begin the long pilgrimage that was to lead him from his early studies of peasant life to his triumphant discovery of colour.

Another sound makes me look up again. It comes from a ghetto-blaster carried by a tall, mustachioed German with a bicycle, which he sets down before beginning to practise intricate, virile dance-steps, between the acrobats and the barber, who is still intent on his work. The audience is appreciative, but the shadow of a nearby tree has lengthened to cover me, so I move to the sunny edge of the lake. I become aware of

the ever-present Vondelpark juggler. I am surprised how much he has improved during the year that I have been watching him practise. Now the silver-coloured batons explode from his hands like a burst of fireworks in the evening sunlight.

A South American drinks vendor pedals up with two blue coolers strapped to his bicycle. The red-headed French family nearby buys beer. He apologizes that he has no mineral water for me. I turn once more to Van Gogh and his unquenchable thirst for recognition and his developing exile. The low throb of a guitar, and I turn round. Two Dutch guys and a Peruvian have settled on the grass nearby. As I look on, the Peruvian produces a small bamboo flute and conjures up a delicate, perfectly-controlled jazz piece. The Dutch guitarist throws back his head and laughs joyously and long. No mere joke could have ignited that laugh; the warmth of pure well-being radiates so far out from their circle that it seems to touch all those around. They play Latin songs and sing. Their voices are not very good and I can barely make out the Spanish words. The guitarist laughs again and again.

I try not to let my envy of their easy companionship show by returning to Van Gogh. He has cut off his ear and has been abandoned by Gauguin, who complains that Vincent's brother looks at his paintings "with the cold eyes of the Dutchman". The Latin American vendor cycles past again, sells a few drinks and then parks his bicycle near the group with the guitars. They shift to make room for him in their circle and he begins to sing in a weak tremulous voice. I strain my ears in anticipation of the Spanish lyrics, but the words are English and familiar.

". . . I am just a poor boy so my story's seldom told. I have squandered my resistance for a pocket full of mumbles, such are mumbles, such are promises. . . ." It is an old Simon and Garfunkel ballad that I remember by heart from my teenage days in the 1960s. ". . . All lies and jests; still, the man hears what he wants to hear and disregards the rest. . . ."

A confused stirring draws attention to the other side of the path. The Turkish acrobats and the German dancer have joined forces, creating a mobile human pyramid with the broad German shoulders over the bicycle handlebars as its base. More and more of the Turks pile on, their locks flowing in the wind as the bicycle wobbles down the slope until, at the last moment, they scatter to right and to left. The spectators chuckle; it is starting to become like a circus. The acrobats and the clowns are as one in the fading light.

■

LOVE AND JUSTICE

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them.

NEW TESTAMENT,
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW, VII, 12

"When I left home and my family, I was no more than a boy," the drinks vendor sings on, "in the company of strangers, in the quiet of a railway station, running scared . . . "—the guitar ripples through the interlude—"Keeping low, seeking out the poorer quarters where the ragged people go, looking for the places only they would know. . . ."

The Dutchman raises his arm. "All together now!" and the group joins in the refrain, "Lai la lai . . . lai la lai, lai, lai la lai. . . ." Those of us around begin to join in hesitantly, but the wind is becoming chilly and the crowd in the park is thinning out.

The drinks vendor's voice floats out again. "Asking only workman's wages I come looking for a job. But I get no offers. . . ." The note goes too low and he dissolves into a mumble. The laughing Dutchman stops to adjust his guitar while the flute plays on and I turn back to Van Gogh. Now he is embracing utter loneliness after the people of Arles have petitioned for his eviction. His madness scares them. And me. I know where it will lead.

I pause for respite and the guitar strums again. "And I'm laying out my winter clothes and wishing I was gone . . . going home . . . where the New York city winters aren't bleeding me, leading me-ee-ee . . . going home. . . . "

As I take up the next refrain with those left in the park, the gooseflesh on my arm tells me it is time to go. I put away my book and pick up my bicycle. But the guitars rise crescendo to the final stanza.

". . . In a clearing stands a boxer and a fighter by his trade, and he carries the reminder of every glove that laid him low and cut him, till he cried out, in his anger and his shame, 'I am leaving, I am leaving' . . . But the fighter still remains. . . . " ❐

UNESCO ON VIDEO

In a changing world, a short video-film produced by Unesco's audio-visual information service, shows by means of specific examples how Unesco—in collaboration with its member states, other United Nations institutions, non-governmental organizations and partners from many different backgrounds—is endeavouring to respond to a number of major challenges of our time: the development of human resources; the protection of the environment; the preservation of the cultural heritage; and the promotion of intellectual exchanges to serve the cause of peace. The programme's running time is 25 minutes 45 seconds. It is available in English, French and Spanish. Further information may be obtained from the Audio-visual Production Service of the Office of Public Information, Unesco, 7, Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris.

LAND OF THE FUTURE

Terre d'Avenir (Land of the Future) is the title of the First International Development Forum, held at Le Bourget (France) from 5 to 7 June 1992. The Forum is being organized on the initiative of the Catholic Committee against Hunger and for Development under the sponsorship of the United Nations and Unesco. By highlighting the increasingly close links between environmental and development issues, "Land of the future" echoes the preoccupations of the Earth Summit being held in Rio de Janeiro at the same time. The purpose of the Forum is to bring together people who are concerned in development and to inform a wide public of the issues involved. The *Unesco Courier* and other Unesco publications are being displayed at the Forum.

DRAWING COMPETITION WILL ALERT CHILDREN TO DRUG PROBLEMS

As part of its activities to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse (26 June), Unesco, in co-operation with the Paris City authorities, is organizing a drawing competition for children in Europe. The competition is open to primary-school children in the 10-11-year age group, who will be asked to illustrate their ideas on how to prevent drug abuse. Its purpose is to alert families and the general public to the gravity of the problem, and to provide teachers with an opportunity to raise the subject in the classroom. Some thirty-three European countries have been contacted through their National Commissions for Unesco, with a view to their taking part in the competition. The five prize-winners and their teachers will be invited for a one-week visit to Paris.

CANCER, AIDS AND SOCIETY

Ways of integrating science, medical practice and health policies in a multidisciplinary approach to cancer and AIDS were discussed at a symposium held at Unesco Headquarters from 23 to 25 March and attended by 300 internationally known physicians, legal experts, moral philosophers and politicians. Unesco, which took part in the meeting along with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Council of Europe and the European Academy of Sciences, Arts and Humanities, drew particular attention to the bio-ethical dimension of research, especially in cases where genetical manipulation is involved.

Among other issues discussed were the behavioural and socio-cultural aspects of the prevention of cancer and AIDS and policies for tackling the two diseases in Europe and the developing world. Participants also raised the question of human rights in clinical tests and the impact of the media on health policies.

A PRIZE FOR CREATIVITY

A Unesco Prize for the Promotion of the Arts, established through a generous initiative by the Japanese painter Kaii Higashiyama and with the assistance of the National Federation of Unesco Associations of Japan, will be awarded for the first time in May 1993. Its purpose is to reward outstanding creative achievements by young artists, or groups of artists, in the visual arts (painting, sculpture and graphics) and in the performing arts, and to encourage their further development as artists. The Prize will be awarded, once every two years, to 5 laureates or groups of laureates, by the Director-General of Unesco, on the basis of proposals from an international Jury of seven eminent persons from different parts of the world. Each prize will consist of approximately US$20,000. ❐

Commentary by Federico Mayor

This text is the first of a series in which the Director-General of Unesco will set forth for readers of the Courier his thinking on matters of current concern.

TIME OF PROMISE

WE are living in times of radical change, and the international community through the United Nations system must address the many challenges and opportunities to which these changes give rise, not least in the field of human rights.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of East-West confrontation, ideological disputes on the basic concept of human rights have been replaced by general agreement on the crucial importance of their observance, notably for the maintenance of international peace and security. Human rights are assuming new dimensions in international relations. A new practice is emerging: the scope of domestic jurisdiction is narrowing and the principle of non-intervention is being interpreted more flexibly. Respect for human rights is now a factor influencing bilateral and multilateral relations and is moreover regarded as an important criterion for the recognition of newly independent states. This new and broader perspective offers the United Nations opportunities for strengthening human rights mechanisms and procedures, as well as for establishing new forms of preventive and early-warning action.

The substantial progress of civil and political rights in many regions of the world today—in particular Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa—is obviously a source of great satisfaction. However, such progress is hardly matched by improvements in economic, social and cultural conditions. There is a real danger that advances in the political sphere will be eroded by poverty and underdevelopment. Moreover, totalitarian or authoritarian régimes in many countries have left behind them a legacy of hatred, intolerance and prejudice that can easily express itself as discrimination based on differences in ethnic origin, language, religion or belief. These risks are naturally increased by a wider context of escalating population growth, environmental threats and the pressures to which many national and cultural communities are subjected.

TRAINING MINDS

The founding fathers of UNESCO were surely right to affirm that the political and economic arrangements of governments are not the sufficient conditions for building a more prosperous and secure world. Such a goal also requires the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind, universally recognized values, including respect for international law, human rights, fundamental freedoms and human dignity. The surest location for the defences of peace and human rights is in the minds of men and women. It is therefore important that human rights education should become part of the curriculum from the earliest stages of schooling, since it is the best way to forge attitudes, shape behaviour and prepare individuals for assuming rights and responsibilities.

Our ultimate goal is the creation of a comprehensive system of human rights teaching and education for all citizens and populations, extending from primary through university education to out-of-school education.

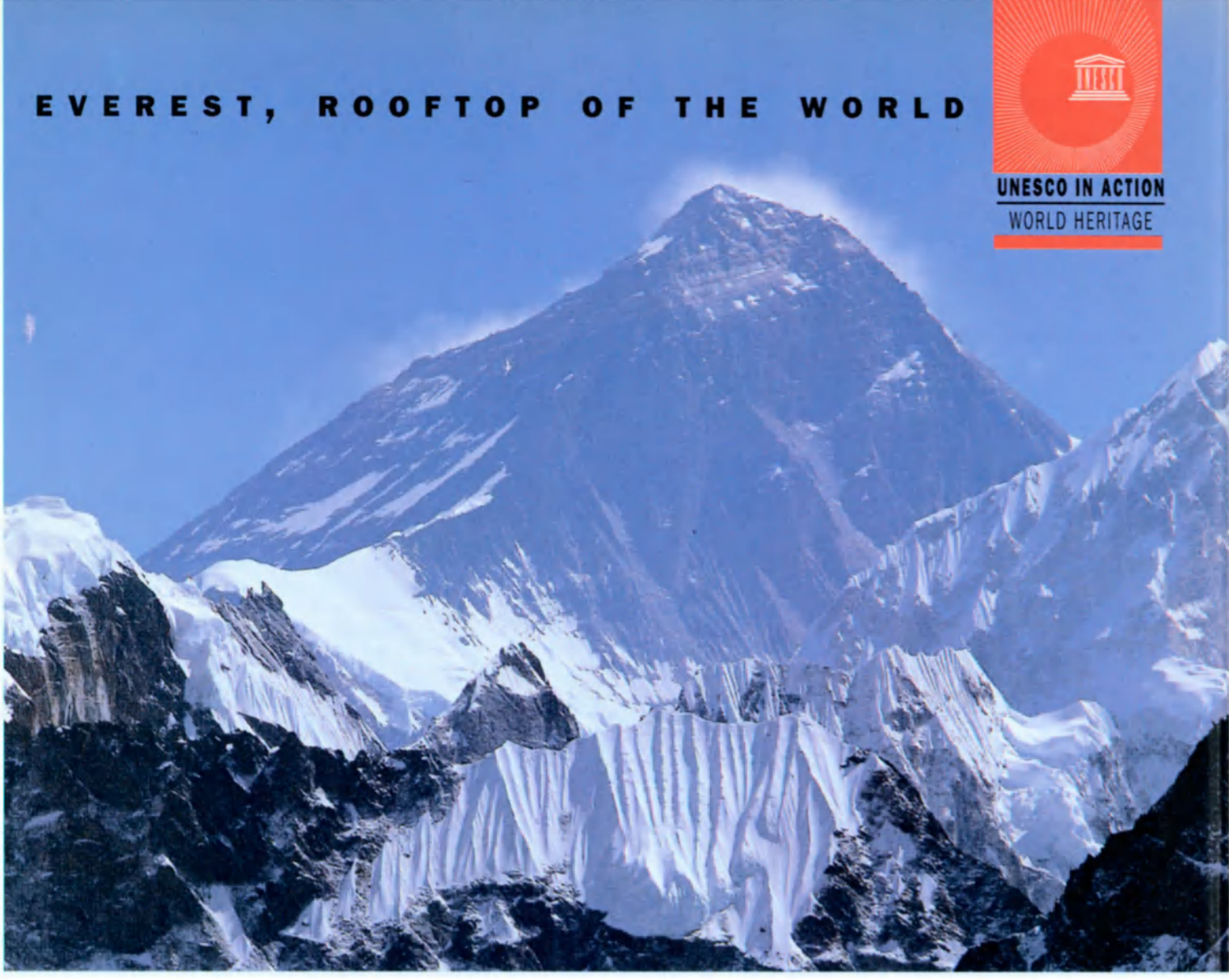
There are many areas in which UNESCO can make an original contribution to the development of human rights. One such area is that of academic freedoms. This issue has hitherto been dealt with mainly in terms of the professional status of teachers and scientific researchers. The time would seem ripe to discuss and analyse the question from a broader standpoint—in terms of the rights and freedoms of the members of the academic community, freedom of scientific research, the right to teach, freedom of intellectual co-operation, as well as the special responsibilities of scientists. Another area concerns the impact of scientific and technological progress on human rights. Of particular interest here is the study of bioethics. UNESCO also envisages activities aimed at further elaboration of the concept of cultural identity and cultural rights, which in our view cannot be regarded as a sufficiently developed category of human rights.

LIFE IN DEMOCRACY

But perhaps the most important area of reflection relating to human rights at the present time is that of democracy. No one can doubt the close links between human rights and democracy. The struggle for human rights has paved the way for the democratization process we are currently witnessing in various parts of the world. Equally, it is clear that only genuine democracy can guarantee the full implementation of human rights. However, democratic institutions can only function effectively in a cultural context in which citizens, playing their full participatory role as the agents and beneficiaries of democratic processes, are able to exercise the free and informed choices on which democracy ultimately depends.

Democracy rests on cultural foundations—including patterns of knowledge acquisition and exchange, attitudes and values—which ultimately transcend political structures. These cultural dimensions of democracy merit the same kind of serious reflection that the cultural dimensions of development are at last receiving. Only democracy can provide the framework within which minority cultures can find full expression, intercultural dialogue can effectively take place and tolerance can flourish.

It is our deep conviction that research and education on human rights need to be supplemented with research and education on democratic practice. Our main objective is to assist in the formation of citizens able and willing to participate actively in the political, social, economic and cultural life of society and in the decision-making process. UNESCO is committed to play a part in this endeavour, which we have called "the preparation of societies for life in democracy". ❐



The road to Sagarmatha

BY JOSÉ SERRA VEGA

SAGARMATHA, Everest or Qomolangma, as it is known in Nepal, Europe and Tibet respectively, is the world's highest mountain, with an elevation of 8,848 metres above sea level. It is also one of the world's most extraordinary places, for at least two reasons. On the one hand, it is the highest point in the Himalaya (a Sanskrit word meaning the "abode of the everlasting snows"), the great mountain range separating the hot plains of India from the high plateaux of Tibet, where two of the sacred rivers of Hinduism, the Ganges and the Brahmaputra, have their sources. On the other, its spectacularly beautiful setting harbours a wide variety of plant and animal life, as well as ethnic groups with highly original cultures.

Some forty million years ago, as a result of continental drift, the Indian subcontinental plate, which was moving at a rate of ten centimetres a year, collided with that of the Euroasiatic continent and caused a powerful tectonic uplift. "Slices" of the sub-continent were piled on top of one other like a gigantic layer cake. In this way the Himalayan chain began to take shape, and from that day to this the summit of Sagarmatha has risen at a constant rate of two millimetres a year.

The Tibetan name Qomolangma, which means "mother goddess of the world", appears on a map drawn by the Jesuits in the seventeenth century. More recently, in 1852, it was recorded as "Peak 15", the highest mountain in the world, in the great Trigonometrical Survey of India

JOSÉ SERRA VEGA,
a Peruvian engineer and former staff member of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has worked in the Indian sub-continent on technologies geared to environmental conservation, during which time he spent two months in Tibet.

carried out by the British on the initiative of Sir George Everest. The survey in this part of Nepal, which Europeans were forbidden to enter, was made by Hindu topographers, often disguised as pilgrims and equipped with rosaries with a hundred beads instead of the usual 108 to help them to count their paces and measure distances. The surveyors also used thermometers hidden in their walking sticks to measure the altitude by observing the temperature at which water boiled.

At the foot of Sagarmatha is the high valley of Solu-Khumbu, gouged out of the rock by the Dudh Kosi, or "river of milk", which rises in the mountain glaciers. There live the Sherpas—in Tibetan the "shar-ba" or "people living in the east"—who arrived in Tibet in the sixteenth century. The rhythm of their lives was punctuated by the transhumance of yaks and dzos (a hybrid between the yak and the domestic cow) to the high pastures during the short summer, and the movement of caravans which carried cereals to Tibet through the Nangpa La pass and returned with salt and wool. This peaceful way of life was only interrupted once in the eighteenth century by an invasion of Tibet by Gurkha warriors and a counter-attack by Chinese forces in a bid to help the Dalai Lama, which obliged the Nepalese to withdraw and pay tribute to the Celestial Empire.

Around 1950, the king of Nepal decided to open his country's borders. Mountaineers from all over the world now had an opportunity to pit themselves against the world's highest peaks, but this brought a far-reaching change to the Khumbu region and the life of the Sherpas. In the 1980s international tourism became a mass phenomenon. In the spring and autumn of 1990 alone some 12,000 tourists (approximately two tourists for each local inhabitant) visited this fragile region.

Sagarmatha National Park

In 1976 the Nepalese Government decided to create the Sagarmatha National Park, with an area of some 1,240 square kilometres, in order to safeguard the region's exceptional plant and animal life. Sir Edmund Hillary, who with Sherpa Tenzing Norgay had been the first to conquer Sagarmatha, in 1953, played an important role in this initiative. Previously he had also made a significant contribution, through his Himalayan Trust foundation, to providing the people of Solu-Khumbu with schools, hospitals, bridges and drinking water systems.

Reforestation is urgently needed and several small-scale projects have been started using the most common native trees found in the Park, such as juniper, pine and silver fir. A campaign, targeted especially at young people, has been launched to make the population aware of the problems caused by massive deforestation over a long period. Perhaps it would also be a good idea to plant copses around each village to provide the villagers with wood, as is the practice in the arid zones of China.

A snow leopard

In addition to Sagarmatha, the Park includes some of the world's highest and most beautiful peaks: Lhotse (8,501 m), Cho Oyu (8,153 m), Nuptse (7,855 m), the majestic Pumori (7,651 m), gigantic glaciers and many lakes and ponds.

A number of rare and endangered animal species are found in the Park. They include the mysterious snow leopard, which is rarely seen in its natural surroundings but whose fur, supplied by poachers, can be seen in the shops of Kathmandu; the Himalayan thar, a goat capable of scaling almost vertical slopes; the small musk deer, which Tamang hunters from the foothills hunt because of the commercial value of the "musk pod", a gland which is considered to have medicinal and aphrodisiac properties by the Chinese and whose value on the international market is higher than the average annual income of a Nepalese villager; and the striking Impeyan pheasant which has plumage of nine colours and a green pennant-like crest.

It would be impossible not to mention the yeti, "the abominable snowman". This legendary creature, a product of the Sherpa imagination, is supposed to devour villagers, but no other proof of its existence can be found than a wall-painting and a fur-covered skull (probably that of an antelope) displayed in the Pangboche monastery.

Ancient Pathways

For tourists with enough time and physical energy, the best way to reach the Park is on foot. It takes around twenty-five to thirty days to walk from Lamosangu to Kala Pattar, directly opposite the summit of Sagarmatha, along the route from Kathmandu to the Tibetan frontier, via Jiri, where the asphalt road comes to an end.

After leaving Jiri, the traveller has to cross the peaks of six mountain chains, alternately plunging into tropical valleys where there are multicoloured butterflies, occasional snakes and, during the monsoon, countless leeches, before climbing again through woods and giant rhododendrons which flower in March, to cols some 3,200 metres high from which the snowbound peaks can be seen. The path wends its way through villages where the houses have large balconies decorated with prayer-flags, past small Buddhist monasteries with dark sanctuaries redolent of yak butter, beside many cultivated terraces, over precarious bridges crossed by caravans of nimble yaks, through pine forests, and along the edges of sheer-sided gorges. A swing hanging over a 600-metre-deep precipice, at the bottom of which a stream rushes, is a challenge to the bravest.

Wayfarers can stay in the dwellings of hospitable Newar and Gurung villagers in the foothills, and share their tasty dishes of rice and potatoes. After several days' walk the first Sherpa houses come into view. They are built of stone and have multicoloured wooden windows, flat roofs and Buddhist prayer-flags with ribbons fluttering in the wind.

The World of Sherpas

The heart of the Sherpa home is the kitchen with its burnished kettles, copper saucepans and an ever-burning fire. Visitors are invited to take part in the life of the family, and are offered a cup of chang, strong beer made from malted rice. In many houses which are also small restaurants, Western tourists may be offered a menu more suited to their taste, with sweetmeats, pancakes with honey, cereals and dried apples.

A Himalayan black bear

Sherpa society is exogamous and is noted for its extremely liberal sexual mores (there is a tradition of both polygamy and polyandry). It is divided hierarchically, with the higher ranks being occupied by descendants of the founders of the villages; and blacksmiths, basket-weavers and butchers belonging to the lower orders. However, the opening-up of Nepal to the outside world and the closing of the Tibetan border by the People's Republic of China in 1951 led to far-reaching changes in the organization of Sherpa society. Today it is common for the more prosperous tradespeople to go to Hong Kong and Bangkok to buy textiles and electronic equipment. In the shops of Namche Bazar, the region's Sherpa centre, it is even possible to buy Maradona T-shirts.

The Sherpas, who do not appear to have been very religious in the early centuries of their settlement in Nepal, now observe a stricter form of Buddhism, perhaps due to the influence of missionaries from Tibet. Sherpa society today contributes generously to the maintenance of the famous monasteries of Thame and Thyangboche.

In the courtyards of these monasteries the annual festivals of Mani Rimdu are magnificently celebrated in broad daylight or at full Moon. Monks dressed in brocade and wearing masks depicting demons or animals, mime the triumph of Buddhism over the forces of evil and dance to the sound of flutes made from human shinbones, drums and enormous copper trumpets. These festivals provide the villagers from all around with an opportunity to get together, see old friends and arrange marriages.

The monastery of Thyangboche stands in a spectacular setting amidst high snowy mountains, on a summit covered with woods that are fast disappearing. Not long ago the monastery was badly damaged by fire, but it is now being rebuilt. On entering its kitchens full of enormous bowls and churns for preparing the roasted barley flour known as *tsampa*, and salty tea whipped with butter, a restorative drink for travellers who have just come in from the cold, one has the impression of travelling back in time to the Middle Ages.

Beyond the monastery the path continues to rise. Trees no longer grow. Travellers would be well advised to make a halt at Pheriche, around 4,300 metres high, or at Lobuche, to let the effects of altitude sickness wear off. After two days' walk across wide stretches of glacial morane, it is possible to begin the ascent of the 5,545-metre-high Kala Pattar, from which, in late afternoon, the golden peak of Sagarmatha can be seen. Makalu, the fifth highest mountain in the world, can also be seen, along with the great swathe of snow joining Lhotse and Nuptse, which have still not been fully explored.

An Urgent Task

The next day's stage is across the spectacular Khumbu glacier, which is covered with masses of extraordinarily shaped pieces of ice glistening like thousands of diamonds in the Sun, as far as the base camp of the expeditions which set out to climb Sagarmatha. Sometimes four or five groups of mountaineers will be waiting to begin the ascent, each by a different route. Tents and containers are everywhere, and also, unfortunately, piles of rubbish which earlier expeditions have not bothered to take away with them. The federations and clubs to which the mountaineers belong ought to work out some kind of scheme to provide funds for keeping the site clean.

It is intended to increase the area of the Park to some 3,900 square kilometres, and the Chinese government proposes to expand neighbouring reserves on the Tibetan side to some 10,400 square kilometres, thus creating one of the world's biggest conservation areas.

Safeguarding the site is now an urgent task because of the increasingly serious threats to the environment. Since 1950 tourism has had a devastating effect on the forest resources. Owing to runaway growth in the demand for firewood, entire stretches of woodland have disappeared. Many small hotels and houses have been built along the paths, and mountaineering expeditions have become complex organizations employing hundreds of porters and sometimes camping for several months waiting for the weather to improve before they start on the climb. The deterioration of the landscape is extending to other regions such as the high valley of the Arun, near Solu-Khumbu, which was hitherto virtually unaffected but is now being burned and cleared to provide farmland and wood supplies.

Some steps have already been taken to encourage the use of fossil fuels and to oblige expeditions to bring their own fuel in the form of kerosene or gas. Two small hydroelectric power stations have also been built, one for Namche Bazar and the other for the Thyangboche monastery.

By including this exceptional region on the World Heritage List, UNESCO is contributing to its conservation, but there can be no doubt that more financial support will be necessary from the developed countries, which are the Park's main users, to carry out large-scale reforestation and meet the energy needs of the population. Only energetic and concerted action will make it possible for people, plants and animals to continue to live on these marvellous slopes for many generations to come. ❐

RECENT RECORDS

MUSIC FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Argentina. ***Tritonic Musics of the North-West***
Musics and Musicians of the World
CD Unesco D 8208

To the world of music, Argentina is the land of the tango, yet it has a rich heritage of folk music that is little known outside its borders. This recording provides an opportunity to get to know the music of the indigenous peoples of the north-west region of the country. With their strange sonorities and striking rhythms, the tritonic instrumental pieces for percussion and wind bear little resemblance to any other known musical forms, except perhaps for some distant similarity to Tibetan horn music. Equally fascinating are the *tondas* and *copias*, vocal pieces chanted in nasal tones in pre-Columbian languages. Far less westernized than the Indian music of Peru or Bolivia, this ancient music reveals clear evidence of Asian influences preserved over the centuries in Indian cultures.

Stellio et son orchestre antillais
L'Etoile de la Musique créole
CD Music Memoria 30838

Known to the world as Stellio, the clarinettist Fructueux Alexandre grew up in French Guyana and in Martinique. He it was who brought the *beguine* to Paris, which he first performed at the famous *Bal Nègre* in 1929. Here, he and his band—trombonist Archange St. Hilaire, pianist and 'cellist Victor Collat, violinist Ernest Léardée and drummer-singer Orphélien (plus singers Léona Gabriel and Jeanne Rosillette on some tracks)—offer a range of sparkling pieces (mazouk, beguines, waltzes) all strongly influenced by the jazz of New Orleans, a city close to the Antilles both culturally and geographically.

China. ***China Wind and Percussive Instrumental Ensembles***
CD Unesco D 8209

These recordings, made in Shanghai, illustrate various aspects of Chinese "learned" and folk music. The first five tracks, performed by a group from the Quanzhou opera, are reminiscent of Japanese *gagaku* music, which is itself of Chinese origin. Two pieces, "Approaching the dressing-table" and "Four in one", played by groups from south of the "River" (the Yangzi jiang), are strikingly original. The later tracks, played by the Bainigan village orchestra, cover a variety of themes. The orchestra consists of wind instruments (oboes, a flute, a clarinet), strings (lute and viols) and percussion (gongs, drums, etc.). The intricate structures and sophisticated polyphony bear witness to the quality of a musical heritage that the West is only now beginning to discover.

Mongolia. ***Traditional Music***
CD Unesco D 8207

With Mongolia again coming to occupy a prominent place on the world scene and rediscovering its cultural roots, it is fitting that its music should be made available to a wider public. Mongolian music is essentially vocal (Mongolians like to sing to fill the empty silence of the steppes) and involves complicated techniques. The famous diphonic Mongolian chant, the *Khoomii*, has been the subject of many studies by ethnomusicologists. "The fair Altai", a love song, is sung in homophony in a remarkable performance by two men with quite different voices who achieve perfect synchronization through a series of complicated glissando passages. Equally astonishing is "The four seasons", played on the flute using the continuous breathing technique.

JAZZ

Abbey Lincoln.
You Gotta Pay the Band
Abbey Lincoln (vocals),
Stan Getz (tenor saxophone),
Hank Jones (piano), Charlie Haden (bass), Mark Johnson (drums),
Maxine Roach (viola).
CD Gitanes Jazz/Verve 511 110-2

After a few years of undeserved eclipse, Abbey Lincoln (also known as Aminata Moseka) has again come to the forefront of the musical scene. With her husky voice, which can slide from velvety softness to metallic sharpness, and her unique diction and phrasing, Lincoln is a true musician and a mistress of understatement. There is a lot of love in her songs—sometimes wounded love which finds release in the wider love of life and of humanity. Like Carmen McRae and other great jazz singers, Abbey Lincoln knows how to draw out the full value of the words—never trite—of her lyrics. Sad at times, this recording, with solos by Stan Getz, is nevertheless beautiful and moving. It was recorded just before Stan Getz died.

Archie Shepp Quartet.
I Didn't Know About You
Archie Shepp (tenor and alto saxophone), Horace Parlan (piano), Wayne Dockery (bass), George Brown (drums)
CD Timeless Records SJP 370

At the end of the 1960s, Archie Shepp was one of the chief advocates of free jazz. Later he spent several years as a university teacher. Today his improvisations are made against a more precise harmonic background, but he has lost none of his militant sharpness ("Go Down Moses") or his power of expression. "Billie's Bossa", for example, is virile bossa nova, its shape emphasized by the forceful playing of the pianist. It is a far cry from the delicate improvisations of a João Gilberto or a Tom Jobim. Shepp's name has now joined the roll of the great saxophonists (Coleman Hawkins, Dexter Gordon, John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins) who have left their mark on the history of jazz.

Tommy Flanagan.
Positive Intensity
Tommy Flanagan (piano), Ron Carter (bass), Roy Haynes (drums).
CD Sony Music 467692 2

Another sparkling recording from this sophisticated pianist from Detroit, the cradle of several jazz pianists, who was for many years accompanist to Ella Fitzgerald. Flanagan's playing is calm, economical, balanced and, to quote the title of one of the tracks on this compact, "Smooth as the Wind". The refined music he distils, notably in "52nd Street Theme" (a beboppers' old faithful) classes him as the direct heir of Bud Powell.

■ *ISABELLE LEYMARIE*

CLASSICAL

Karol Szymanowski.
Work for violin and piano
Annick Roussin (violin),
Pascal Le Corre (piano)
CD Accord 201122

Situated in time between Chopin and the post-1945 Polish School, the composer Szymanowski is to Poland what Janácek was to Czechoslovakia and Bartok was to Hungary. More innovative than Janácek but perhaps less so than Bartok, his work is, undeservedly, far too little known. Recordings of his chamber music are even more rare than those of his symphonic or operatic works. His "Sonata Opus 9" reveals the influence of Brahms or of Richard Strauss, but one cannot fail to be struck by the extraordinary, magical beauty of his "Myths Opus 30" (1916) in which he pays tribute to the Greek myths that have always exercised a certain fascination over him. His genius comes into full flower in his remarkable "Berceuse Opus 52".

Ysang Yun. ***Garak—5 Studies for flute, Octet, Concerto for flute and orchestra***
Pierre-Yves Artaud (flute), Jacqueline Mefano (piano), the 2E2M Ensemble.
CD ADDA 571166

Ysang Yun was born in Korea in 1917. After a stormy period of political dissent, he has settled in Germany where he teaches music and composes. The most ambitious of his works on this recording is his "Concerto", written in 1977. It contrasts the orchestra, representing the metamorphoses of nature, with the solo flute, beautifully played by Pierre-Yves Artaud, which evokes a girl and her almost sensuous attachment to a statue of Buddha. This is an entrancing, rather traditional work, whose internal rhythms remind us of the composer's origins.

Granados by Alicia de Larrocha
Allegro de concerto, Danza lenta, Goyescas, El Pelele.
CD RCA Victor Red Seal RD 60408

The great Spanish pianist Alicia de Larocha has recorded Granados' "Goyescas" at least three times—in 1964 for Erato, a 1967 LP for Decca, and in 1989 and 1990 for this recording (there is also an old LP by Everest Records, which brings together recordings made by Granados himself). A special tribute to the artist Goya, the "Goyescas", dating from 1911, borrow from the fantasies of Goya's paintings, Spanish folklore and twentieth-century experiments in keyboard technique. Alicia de Larrocha brings out the morbid undertones and the secret, penetrating dance rhythms of the "Goyescas" with consummate skill. From the resonance of this original music she draws out a new sense of pathos and melancholy.

George and Ira Gershwin.
Girl Crazy
Under the direction of John Mauceri
CD 7559-79250-2

Produced on Broadway in 1930 during the Depression, this musical comedy by George Gershwin had a second great success in the 1940s with the film version starring Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney. The very feeble libretto is based on the idea, already in vogue at the time, of going back to the land. Ira Gershwin's often remarkable lyrics gave rise to a series of hit numbers such as "Bidin' my Time", "Embraceable You" and "I got rhythm". One has a feeling that George Gershwin is somewhat cramped by the musical comedy straitjacket and is already thinking in terms of the more serious operatic form which he brought to fruition with "Porgy and Bess". This compact is a welcome addition to the recorded history of his work.

■ *CLAUDE GLAYMAN*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CALLING ALL COURIER READERS

For many years now, I have been a regular reader of the *Unesco Courier*, which provides a window on the world and on others and seeks to bring people together in that noblest of pursuits, the quest for knowledge. In order to complete my collection of the *Courier*, I am looking for the following numbers of the French edition: July-August 1956; October 1960, January, April and July-August 1962, April 1965, May 1968 and January 1982.

In addition, for anybody who may be interested, I have on offer 113 copies of the French edition, covering the period from 1964 to 1980, including complete sets for 1976 and 1978.

Harold Labésse,
12, avenue Benoist Lévy,
94160 Saint-Mandé (France)

EDUCATION IN MEXICO

In the first instalment of your survey of *Unesco*'s first 45 years, published in your October 1991 number ("Children in Danger"), you omitted to mention certain important developments that took place in 1947.

At the Unesco General Conference held in that year, Manual Gual Vidal, who was later to become Mexico's Minister of Education, was the first person to put forward a proposal for a basic education project. This project was approved in plenary session and was implemented in part of the Mexican State of Nayarit. At the same time, an experiment along similar lines was conducted in the Marbial region of Haiti.

A step-by-step account of this Mexican experiment is given in the book *Santiago Ixcuintla* by Mario Aguilera Dorantes and Isidro Castillo, published in Mexico City in 1970, which is an extremely useful source of information for teachers in Mexico and elsewhere.

I realize that you cannot go into details of all Unesco's activities in the 45-year period covered by your interesting chronological survey, but in view of the decisive role played by your Organization in the field of education, especially in rural areas, I wanted to make this additional point of clarification.

Maria Elena Guerra y Sanchez
Pàtzcuaro (Michoacán), Mexico

WHAT ABOUT MUSIC EDUCATION?

In your review of the year 1953 in "Unesco's First 45 Years" (November 1991 issue on "Environment and Development"), you failed to mention, among other important events, the foundation in Brussels of the International Society for Music Education (ISME).

Perhaps this was an oversight on your part.

J. Lohmann
Rébénacq (France)

The International Society for Music Education (ISME) was established in 1953 at an International Conference on Music Education which was held at Unesco's instigation and was attended by teachers from forty countries. The Society's aim is to make music education an integral part of general education and community life and to stimulate it as a profession. For reasons of space, we have only been able to give a brief overview of the wide range of activities in which Unesco has engaged or with which it has been associated. It is possible that a fuller version of this 45-year chronology may eventually appear in book form.

CITIZEN OF THE WORLD

As a long-standing reader of the *Unesco Courier*, I should like to congratulate you on the high standard of your publication, which I read with great pleasure each month.

Living as I do in the multi-ethnic microcosm formed by the island of Réunion (who could imagine a more aptly evocative name?), I particularly appreciate the variety and abundance of the illustrations, information and opinions you put together and the way in which they relate to one another.

I hope you will go on working for greater mutual knowledge and understanding between peoples.

Sylvie Buren
La Ravine-des-Cabris (Réunion)

PHARAOH'S TREASURE IN PETRA

As a lecturer on cultural tours, I know Petra well and was glad that you published a feature on that splendid site in your January 1992 number ("The Demographic Dimension").

However, the monument you reproduce in the photograph on page 47 is incorrectly identified. Contrary to what the caption states, the monument shown is not the Obelisk Tomb but the Khazne Firaoun (or "Pharaoh's Treasure"), which is the most important and perhaps the most beautiful monument on the site.

Monique Tillot

THE INVISIBLE WOMAN

I was amazed to read in Perdita Huston's article "Women and Nature: an alliance for survival" (on page 15 of your March 1992 number "Women speak out on the environment") that "Women's labour has been unpaid and thus considered without 'value' since time began".

What an outrageous idea! Quite the contrary, the completely unpaid work women do, especially in the home, is of incalculable value.

How can anybody make such a preposterous statement?

G. Sirven
Saint-Céré (France)

If Perdita Huston had really said what you claim she did, your indignation would be quite justified But she did not. Her view coincides with your own. In the passage in question, she points an accusing finger at those people who consider the unpaid work done by women as being the "bounty of nature" and who refuse to take account of it, since they regard it as without "value". The Courier *devoted its entire June 1980 number ("The Invisible Woman") to an examination of the factors which denigrate the importance of the economic role performed by women in society.*

CORRECTION

We should like to apologize for two inadvertent editing errors made in Annick Treguer's article "The Chicanos—muralists with a message", which appeared on page 22 of our April 1992 issue on "Art in the street". The second line of the piece of dialogue which opened the article should have read "Because there aren't any museums in East Los Angeles" and not "Because there aren't any museums in Los Angeles". The lower photograph on page 24 shows a scene in Chicano Park, San Diego, and not in Estrada Courts, East Los Angeles.

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Universality: a European vision?

Also featuring an interview with the Greek composer

MIKIS THEODORAKIS

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